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CURRENT COMMENT.

A DISCOURAGED observer of public affairs might take some comfort out of the old pietistic view that the Fordney tariff is a visitation sent by God to bend a perverse and stiff-necked people into the path of wisdom. It may be that this bill is the one thing needful to turn us into a nation of free-traders. The Congress seems determined on carrying out the protectionist policy. Some of our dismayed contemporaries are comforting themselves with the hope that the Fordney bill will be denatured or devitalized in the Senate, but this is a sorry uncertainty, notwithstanding that so many Sauls are now found among the prophets. The Guaranty Trust Company puts the case flatly, saying that "if we now limit the importation of goods by high tariffs, we should do irreparable harm to our export trade by preventing the free exchange of these commodities which our customers have to offer in payment for what they purchase from us."

For our part, while as a matter of fairness to our readers we have said all we could against the Fordney bill, we must confess that we hope it will pass, for the sake of the lively reaction that it will produce. The old-time lecturers on temperance were right; there is nothing like a horrible example. Artemus Ward once organized a strolling dramatic company which, he says, played "The Drunkard, or, The Fallen Saved," with a real drunkard. That sort of thing is what is needed. The Guaranty Trust Company and the *Freeman* and all the other high exponents of economic wisdom can go on lecturing the public until the cows come home, but six months' actual experience under the Fordney tariff will do more to promote the theory and practice of free trade than they could do in a life-time. Therefore we secretly hope that the Congress will be, for once, as invincibly ignorant and obstinate as it knows how to be. Then the Fordney bill will become law, and the country will be in a way to get some elementary education in sound economics.

AN Associated Press dispatch of 24 July from Washington contains some information which we wish to present to the attention of the confiding souls who see possibilities in Mr. Harding's conference on disarmament. The dispatch says that Japan claims certain exclusive rights in Manchuria; that Great Britain asserts control of a sphere of influence in the whole Yangtze Valley;

that the United States has railway-concessions through middle China; that Belgium and Holland have similar interests; that France dominates the Chinese postal-system; that England controls the Chinese maritime customs; that Japan enjoys valuable and exclusive rights in the province of Fukien; and that there is an American concession in China which is based on a tobacco-tax monopoly. Now, we simply ask our friends to look this situation over carefully, to let all its implications sink into their mind, and then say how much they think that a conference such as Mr. Harding proposes can really amount to.

ONE great trouble with our friends who are out for disarmament is that their code of life—at least, the code that they recommend for officeholders—makes so much of what Burke called the heroic virtues. They seem to think that officeholders can be not only heroic, but heroic all the time. This is not the case. No doubt it would be highly heroic and highly moral for officeholders to cleave to idealism in the matter of disarmament, but unfortunately, officeholders are not built that way. Far from it. If they were, they would not be officeholders. The officeholders who will make up Mr. Harding's conference will not proceed in heroic disregard of the practical circumstances indicated in the foregoing dispatch; on the contrary, they will be most strictly governed by them, as they were governed by essentially similar circumstances at Versailles. To think that they will not, argues an inexperience and ignorance that is almost beyond belief; and to encourage other persons to think this is a mischievous disservice. We ask again, as long as landlordism compels the wholesale exportation of capital, resulting in such a conflict of interests as China, for example, exhibits today, how can any nation disarm?

WE are beginning to hear more and more about the ingenious proposal that the soldier-bonus be paid with the interest collected from foreign loans. Even the President is said to be casting a friendly eye on the idea, for we read that it was submitted to him in the course of a special interview a few days ago by Representative Hamilton Fish of New York, who on leaving the White House told a listening world that "the President looked with favour upon the plan"—and well he may, for he is not likely to hear of a more ingenious device for getting rid of two of his most troublesome problems. With a charming *naïveté* which one meets with only in a few children and in most Congressmen, Representative Fish, who is an ex-service man himself, states his belief that "such a plan would result in a settlement of the bonus question in Congress and in the minds of the millions of ex-service men who are in financial need."

MR. FISH is probably right; that is just where the question would be settled by such a plan—in Congress and in the minds of the ex-service men—and after all, those are the only places where it is ever likely to be settled. Mr. Harding and his associates are politicians of a sort, and this is just the kind of a four-flushing scheme that would appeal to them; but they must have a care what they are about. It might result in all sorts of unpleasant complications if the American Legion were to turn its eyes from Washington and send its very insistent and efficient lobbyists to London, Paris, and Rome to hector and bully in approved Legion style the legislatures in those cities, to hurry up with their interest-payments for

the sake of "the boys" at home. For our own part if we were an ex-service man, we should feel more hopeful of getting money out of a Spanish galleon which lies at the bottom of Vigo Bay, than of getting a share of the \$500 million which our late associates in the world-war are under bonds to pay to this country every year by way of interest on their loans.

THE new Chairman of the Shipping Board seems to be trying hard to bring some order out of the chaos of the Board's affairs, and he has the good wishes of this paper in his undertaking. However, the revelations recently made by Mr. Lasker concerning the Board's losses during the war, and its expenditures for the past year, have added considerably to the conviction that the sooner the Government gets out of the shipping business the better it will be for American taxpayers. Mr. Lasker estimates the loss on our war-fleet at four billion dollars. He has, furthermore, made public the fact that the Board last year spent \$680 million, although only one hundred million was appropriated for its use. A large amount of the funds thus squandered, \$500 million to be exact, came from the sale of ships and other capital assets, and from the operation of ships. Mr. Lasker further charges that there has been "incompetency, carelessness, irresponsibility and gross inefficiency" in the conduct of the Board's operations.

THUS, according to Mr. Lasker's statements, the Shipping Board has already cost the people of the United States a loss of nearly five billion dollars. Whether or not Mr. Lasker can put this gigantic wreck on a business footing, his pluck in attempting so ungrateful a task is to be commended; but one can not help feeling that the game is not worth the candle. We do not know the value of the Board's assets, but we imagine that a private shipping-concern which realized \$300 million a year from the operation of its ships and had to pay out \$680 million in operating-expenses would not take long to decide that there was more money to be made in the peanut business. After all, capital assets are worth very little unless they can be made to pay for themselves, and a merchant marine on which the Treasury has already lost over four billion dollars, with the prospect of continued losses in operation for an indefinite period, is certainly worth a good deal less than nothing to American taxpayers. It is very generous of Mr. Lasker to attribute the Board's enormous losses to mere incompetence and carelessness. If we were asked for our own private opinion, we should be inclined to ascribe about \$50,000 of the loss to those causes and the rest to sheer unadulterated rascality.

THERE are others, apparently, besides ourselves, who think it would be good business for the Government to take over the country's transportation-system and persuade Mr. Henry Ford to take charge of it. A dispatch from Michigan informs us that 400 fruit-growers of that State have signed a petition to President Harding, asking that Mr. Ford be put in charge of our railways, citing the fact that while the present high freight-rates are taking most of their profits, the rates on Mr. Ford's own private railway, the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton, have recently been reduced. We heartily wish Mr. Ford might be put in charge of our railways. It would be refreshing to see him hand the Interstate Commerce Commission their hats, show the door to those Wall Street bankers who now pose as railway-operators, and get down to the business of running this country's transportation-system as a transportation-system. One feels that Mr. Ford would have the railways on a sound business-basis in six months, with wages raised and rates lowered to what wages and rates should be; and that he would do this, not by virtue of any miracle-working power, but because his methods are those of the honest business man, whereas the methods hitherto used in the operation of our railways have been those of the dishonest and disreputable speculator.

THE American Farm Bureau does not go so far as to ask that Mr. Ford be put in charge of the railways, but it has prepared a memorial to President Harding, asking for a readjustment of freight-rates. Since this organization represents a million and a quarter American farmers, its protest against the Esch-Cummins law may perhaps make a slight impression in Administration circles. These farmers call attention to the fact that the country, during a period when every one was hard hit by financial depression, "was called upon to assume an increased transportation-burden of \$1,500,000,000 annually." It seems to us that here is a convenient and legitimate beginning for that aid to American farmers which certain Senators so vigorously oppose the Government's making in the form of an appropriation to finance the export of farm-products. In withdrawing part of the subsidy now enjoyed by the railway-companies, the Government would benefit the farmers by a great deal more than the \$100 million provided for in the Norris bill, without having to draw a dollar from the national treasury.

THE precocity of our infant-industries is sometimes nothing less than astonishing. They learn in an incredibly short time to render powerful aid to a solicitous Government which is ever willing to foster their sturdy growth; indeed they are able at quite an early age to take the lead in this important matter. Our infant dye-industry is an interesting case in point. It knows exactly what it wants, and it keeps a good-sized lobby at the seat of Government telling Congress how to "protect home industry" in the dye-business. To be sure, Congress does not always see eye to eye with these assiduous lobbyists; in spite of the backing given it by Republican members of the Ways and Means Committee, the Longworth dye-embargo was thrown out of the Fordney tariff-bill by the House. But the bill has yet to go before the Senate, where there are a great many gentlemen who are never averse to protecting a home industry by giving it power to tax the people of the United States. The gentlemen of the dye-trust may well be of good cheer. They have still every reason to hope for a complete embargo on foreign dyes.

ON the other hand the American dye-makers seem to be up against a more awkward situation in the matter of those German dye-patents which the Chemical Foundation found it so convenient to acquire during the period when Mr. Francis E. Garvan, who, by the way, is now head of the foundation, was Alien-Property Custodian. One wonders just how Mr. Garvan did it; one imagines him, like the Chancellor in "Iolanthe," "pointing out to myself that I was not unacquainted with myself"—and so on. At any rate, Congressman Frear has resolved that this act of Mr. Garvan's as Alien-Property Custodian shall not stand if he can help it. He is, therefore, trying to get Attorney-General Daugherty to start suit for recovery, on the ground that "the sale was fraudulent and simply amounted to seizure of alien patents." In this connexion it is interesting to note that the dye-interests tried to foreclose the Government's right of recovery by an unsuccessful attempt to squeeze into the peace resolution a provision validating all sales by the Alien-Property Custodian. Is it not indeed a precocious youngster, this infant dye-industry of ours, and withal very mischievous?

JUST as we go to press with our plan for the relief of starvation in Russia and China, a dispatch from Washington brings news that the best minds have also been busy in the Samaritan cause. The Russians have asked for bread, and Mr. Hoover has offered them a brickbat, or better perhaps, a bomb. Speaking unofficially, though of course with the knowledge, consent, aid and abetment of the whole hierarchy at Washington, Mr. Hoover has proposed a mobilization of the American Relief Administration for an attack upon the food-problem in Russia, on condition that the Soviet Government shall grant to the Administration a series of privileges which will make

its Russian organization a kind of State within a State. Mr. Hoover emphasizes the fact that the conditions attached to his offer, excepting the demand for the release of all Americans held in Russia, are identical with those which have been accepted by twenty-three other countries in which American relief-work has been carried on. In these twenty-three countries, then, Americans have had full liberty "to come and go and move about" as they pleased, and "to organize the necessary local committees and local assistance free from governmental interference." This sort of thing constitutes an abridgment of sovereignty, wherever it occurs, but these extra-territorial privileges could not possibly have in any other country the extreme significance that would attach to them in Russia. Russia is the only country in the lot which has a revolutionary Government, and by consequence it is the only country in which Mr. Hoover's autonomous organization of natives and foreigners would naturally and necessarily be made up of enemies of the Government and of the social and economic system for which it stands.

SINCE Mr. Hoover gives his word for it that the representatives and assistants of the Relief Administration will not engage in any sort of political activity in Russia, it is to be presumed that this pledge was a part of the contract made with each of the twenty-three Governments with which Mr. Hoover has previously dealt. The Government of Finland was one of these, and the following extract from a Finnish paper will give some notion of the manner in which the pledge of political abstinence may be interpreted. The speakers are, first, a Finnish newspaper reporter; second, Mr. Magnus Swenson, sometime of Madison, Wisconsin, more recently Inter-Allied Food Director for Scandinavia and Finland. To quote: "Is it true, I [the reporter] asked, that our getting food-stuffs depends to some extent on the political system of our country?" "Yes. . . . America and the Entente Powers regard the Bolsheviks as enemies of mankind. The position of your country would become very difficult, and your relations with the Entente countries would perhaps become impossible, if the Bolsheviks should get into power here. . . . In regard to the food-problem, which is the only question within my jurisdiction, I believe it would not be as easy to arrange for food-relief in case you should start negotiations with the present Russian Government. . . ." We quote this statement in substantiation of our belief that even with the best intentions in the world, Mr. Hoover could not keep his representatives and assistants from playing politics whenever they come within striking distance of Russia. In other words, we do not trust the Relief Administration, and we have our own private hunch that the leaders of Soviet Russia share our disposition to look this Trojan gift-horse distrustfully in the mouth.

If and when Mr. Hoover and his confrères in Washington come to the place where they really want to do something for Russia—something that will result in a positive commercial advantage to the United States as well—they will recognize the Soviet Government, and remove all obstacles to trade between the two countries. The report that in 1920 the United States exchanged goods with Russia to the value of \$40 million, as against \$50 million in 1913, is most encouraging, if only for the reason that it indicates what might be done if the Hindenburg line of official stupidity could once be broken. The recent arrest in Chicago of Max Schallman, a Soviet agent, is an example of the sort of thing American business has had to contend with in the building up of this new trade. It is reported that before Federal agents brought his operations to an end by arresting him for the violation of the Espionage Act, Mr. Schallman had discussed with various firms the placing of contracts for something like \$450 million worth of American merchandise. One of the charges against him is that he represented himself as the agent of a foreign Government without first registering himself in this capacity at the office of the Secretary

of State—and thus preparing himself, we suppose, for deportation, in the wake of Mr. Martens. It is a matter of some interest that Mr. Schallman's activities were directed by the Soviet agent in Montreal, Canada, where the Canadian Car and Foundry Company is reported to be already at work on a contract for five hundred tank-cars, to be delivered to the Soviet Government at the price of a round two million dollars.

ON 21 July, American air-men with six two-thousand pound air-bombs sank the German battleship "Ostfriesland," thus proving that a battleship can be destroyed by air-craft. Not one of the bombs made a direct hit, but the ship appears to have been literally shaken to pieces by the force of their explosion. This demonstration, it is prophesied by army and navy officials, will have a great effect upon the naval developments of the future. If navies were ever built for mere defence, and if capital ships were not extremely profitable to the makers of armour-plate, one might almost be led to hope that this instructive experiment would mean the end of the super-dreadnaught. What it is likely to mean in reality is the opening up of a new field of preparedness-expenditure which will offer enormous possibilities of profit to munitions-makers, and the cheerful prospect of increased taxation to the armament-hidden peoples of the earth.

THE Dominion of Canada, the other day, deported seventeen well-meaning American seamen whom the depression in American shipping had driven over there to look for work; and so far we have heard no word of protest from the American Government. Yet the most cautious and indirect attempts of the Mexican Government to rid itself of the pestilent American exploiters who are in Mexico looking for a higher return on their capital than they can get at home, are met by the United States Government with unconcealed hostility. Canada says its ports are well supplied already with seamen and firemen. Very well; but let Mexico intimate that it has no need to import any foreign exploiters, and American warships immediately begin to dodge ominously in and out of Mexican harbours. Is there not something strange about this, in view of the fact that the investor and the labourer are both American citizens, and theoretically equal in the eyes of Washington?

A SPECIAL Soviet Commission in Petrograd, we hear, has been engaged lately in fixing an official scale of values for the purpose of barter. Thus it appears that one pood of barley equals one and one-half poods of wheat, or two poods of oats, three poods of potatoes, five poods of hay, six buckets of milk, five pounds of butter, one pood of cream, 150 eggs, fifteen pounds of meat, one-half of a scythe, one sickle, one pair of flails, one sixteenth of a plough, twenty whetstones, five wooden rakes, two iron rakes, one iron shovel, four horseshoes, one-third of a pound of axle grease, ten pounds of salt, ten pounds of petroleum, thirty boxes of matches, ten lamp-glasses, four packages of sewing-needles, three rolls of yarn, five rolls of wall-paper, 800 cigarettes, one pound of tobacco. This is interesting and suggests to us as we sit here in the trough of the latest heat-wave a scale of values of our own; one glass of something long and wet and cool with a sprig of mint lying along the top, equals the weight in Liberty Bonds of Mr. Volstead and any two of his fellow Congressmen.

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TOPICS OF THE DAY.

A CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTION.

PERSONS of a meditative turn, even though like ourselves they make no pretensions to a complete social philosophy, find interest in the contemplation of an obviously over-populated world. The press-dispatches say that famine-conditions have brought great numbers of Russians to the point of starvation; also that millions of Chinese are so famished that they are about to resort to the extreme measure of killing and eating one another. The newspapers, indeed, draw a picture of misery in these afflicted countries which compares well with the picture of Irish wretchedness drawn by the hand of the poet, Edmund Spenser:

Out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them; they looked like anatomies of death; they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves; they did eat the dead carriages, happy where they could find them, yea, and one another soon after, inasmuch as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves.

Meanwhile in the United States many persons are out of work and living very miserably. Landlordism expropriated them from the soil, and the industrial system absorbed them, as mere masses of exploitable human material, to serve as a labour-motor; and now that industry is slack, they are turned off to exist as best they may, or to starve and perish. They number here, it is said, around four million; and as some of them, no doubt, many of them, have wives and children, these too should be reckoned in as part of the surplus population. In England, we hear, the state of things is much the same. There are, by a conservative estimate, two-and-a-half million in England for whom the industrial system has no use at present; and there is also probably, as here, a fair proportion of dependents to be reckoned in.

Clearly, as long as landlordism exists, these conditions will recur, and Malthusianism must be accepted as the philosophy under which they are to be dealt with. Malthus is, strictly speaking, not sound; for man, unlike the other land-animals, is able to reproduce his own food—so abundantly, indeed, that if he had free access to the soil, the present population of the world could be well fed, and about two-thirds of the earth's surface left untouched and unoccupied. But as long as landlordism denies man the use of his power to reproduce his food, he might as well not have that power; and therefore while Malthusianism is not really sound, it is sound for all practical purposes. The only remedies that can be proposed against the awkward recurrence of these widespread social disorders are palliative and superficial, like those which are advocated by our socialist and liberal friends—old-age pensions, unemployment-insurance, and the like—or else heroic, like war, pestilence and famine. Malthus consistently accepted these last as wholesome and necessary, and made a place for them in his system; and we are surprised every day that our liberal friends do not accept them, since under a system that admits and upholds landlordism there seems nothing else to do in any kind of consistency.

Our suggestion is that since the superfluous population must inevitably somehow be gotten rid of, it be gotten rid of as advantageously as possible. We propose, therefore, that the labour-surplus of the United States and England, with its entire body of dependents, be sent over to be eaten by the famine-stricken Chinese and Russians. This plan is so simple, so strictly a

corollary of the Malthusian philosophy, so economical and so conducive to the perpetuation of landlordism that we really can not see how it is that we, instead of our liberal friends, should be the first to advocate it. This plan of ours would relieve "the pressure of population against the food-supply," and would continually balance the surplus of labour against the fluctuating demands of industry, thereby operating powerfully against discontent and agitation and tending to safeguard the institutions of the country against disturbance. Its effect in the direction of fiscal economy, in reducing the general social overhead, is too apparent to need exposition.

It may be asked, why not instead bring the Chinese and Russians here to furnish a full dinner-pail for the American out-of-work? From the immediate political point of view, this would indeed be better; it would command more votes. But from the point of view of landlordism and hence of *Realpolitik*, it would not serve. The direction of this food-supply should always, to insure the greatest economy, be from a more thoroughly exploited country to one which is less thoroughly exploited; for the reason that in the latter, everything depends upon the maintenance of large masses of low-grade labour. China and Russia are not yet well exploited; England and America are; therefore it is more important to keep great batches of unorganized Chinese and Russians at the margin of subsistence, so that they may be made use of when needed, than to tide over the American out-of-work whose standards of living are higher.

This traffic, moreover, would open the way to considerable general trade and thus enhance the work of exploitation. The domestic market for patent medicines, especially for digestive and dyspepsia-nostrums, must be nearly saturated. The Chinese and Russian famine-sufferers are accustomed to vegetable food, and this stronger flesh-diet would, in their enfeebled condition, probably induce an immense amount of digestive disturbance. It would almost certainly do so if, as every consideration of economy indicates, the food were not shipped on the hoof but killed and dressed here for the sake of the by-products, and transported under refrigeration. This would open a large export-market for our proprietary medicines, and in consideration of the food-supply furnished gratis, our Government could insist upon preferential tariffs to keep the drugs of competing nations out of our sphere of influence. Thus while our drug-industries were making a handsome profit, the Chinese and Russians would also learn the virtues of our tariff-system through its practical application against other people. Many similar possibilities, upon which we have not space to dwell, will occur to the reader at once.

We can see no reasonable objection to this project. Certain sentimental antipathies springing from a spurious humanitarianism might be against it, but hardly any of our reformers, especially of the liberal type, are in a position to adduce them. Those who oppose war on sentimental grounds while acquiescing in the economic system which makes wars inevitable, can not be captious. The decent butchery of a few million superfluous persons and the thrifty disposition of the resulting food-product, is not wasteful, as war is; not half so wasteful as leaving them lying around idle, to beg or steal, while at the same time an abundance of exploitable human material of potential value undergoes depreciation through famine in China and Russia. No prophet can foresee all the exigencies that his doctrine will be called upon to meet; if the the modern Malthusian must go a step beyond Malthus, he is merely

following out the logical development of the system of landlordism which Malthus accepted. If the propagandists of landlordism do their duty by this plan which we propose, they will almost immediately get us used to it and even enthusiastic about it, as they did recently with a much more disorderly and unbusinesslike sort of butchery. Let them call it "equalization" or "stabilization" or something of the kind, and put plenty of salesmanship into its presentation, and before long every one will be for it, with every illogical scruple quieted, and the "relations of capital and labour" will see a long season of peace.

PAYING EUROPE'S LITTLE BILLS.

THIS paper does not pretend to an intimate knowledge of the solemn hocus-pocus known as "diplomatic usage." Mr. Mellon's desire to continue refunding the interest on the Allied indebtedness to this country may be diplomatically correct; but his apparent lack of curiosity about the disposal which those countries are making of their money—and that part of it that is ours—seems an evidence of poor business sense. Does not Mr. Mellon know that every dollar of interest which those countries default has to be made up in taxes by the people of this country, and simply amounts to a new loan to those countries from the pockets of the American taxpayers? It is inconceivable that Mr. Mellon, as a banker, would make a loan of any size without inquiring carefully into the use to be made of his money, his chance of getting regular interest-payments, and of getting his principal when it fell due. If his debtor defaulted on interest-payments, Mr. Mellon would not hesitate to investigate his expenditures, and if it developed that his inability to pay arose from the fact that he was using the amount of his interest-payments for an improper or unprofitable purpose, such as, say, to augment a choice collection of weapons, Mr. Mellon would no doubt consider himself fully justified in taking legal steps to put a damper on his collector's zeal. Such a course might not be diplomatic, but it is sound business practice, and as such is generally recognized.

What are the facts? Our late associates in the war borrowed from this country something over \$10 billion. They now owe us \$943,534,755 in deferred interest-payments, and on that amount, as Senator La Follette recently pointed out, this country is losing annually \$40 million in interest. Our obliging Government is now asking Congress for power to make terms for continuing to refund the interest on these loans; that is, the American people are to continue, willy-nilly, world without end, to make new loans—or gifts—of several hundred million dollars annually to these same foreign Governments. Under the circumstances the expenditures of these Governments are of more than casual interest to us; we are entitled to inquire what is being done with our money.

Two recent dispatches from London throw considerable light on this subject. The first quotes the figures given in the House of Commons on 19 April by Sir L. Worthington Evans, British Secretary of State for War, showing the present numerical strength of the various European armies. The second reports Mr. Lloyd George's recent announcement that Mr. Harding's proposed conference on disarmament would not interfere with the Admiralty's plans for four new battleships to be built at a cost of £28 million. From the first dispatch, it appears that Europe, exclusive of Great Britain, has some 3,334,067 men under arms; a goodly number to be held out of productive pursuits at

a time when the economic structure of Europe is—what it is! Of this number we learn that France, which owes this country \$284,148,863 in deferred interest-payments alone, is supporting an army of 809,652 men, a military establishment four times as large as this country is able to afford; while France's jackal, Poland, has 600,000 men under arms. Italy, owing us interest to the amount of \$161,078,880, has an army of 300,000 men; and little Belgium, owing \$34,007,409, is still somehow able to support a military establishment of 105,000 men. The American taxpayer who considers these figures in the light of our own military budget will be able to get a pretty fair idea why these nations can not raise so much as a *sou* of interest on their debt to us. Munitions-makers are not as easy-going as the Government of the United States; they are out for the dollar, and they get it.

If politicians were also economists, Mr. Mellon and his associates might be expected to realize that this enormous outlay for military purposes, which American taxpayers are helping to finance, is not only bad for Europe but detrimental to our own interests. They would realize that the prosperity of this country depends directly upon the return of economic stability in Europe, and that Europe will never be economically sound while its privileged interests can continue to militarize the Continent for their own profit. While French and British financial groups, for instance, can continue to cripple their German rivals through the use of the military power of their Governments, Europe will remain in a state of economic break-down and American business interests and American workers will suffer as they are suffering. Let anyone who doubts this turn back through the newspaper-files to the time when the Allies decided to "enforce the sanctions," and note how promptly the bottom dropped out of certain American markets, notably the copper-market.

But perhaps it is too much to expect a Government which sponsors such a measure as the Fordney tariff bill to grasp the fact that the prosperity of the United States, as well as the ability of the debtor-nations ultimately to pay their debts, depends upon the ability of Europe to produce and to exchange its products as freely as possible with this country. From that point of view, therefore, the folly of forcing American taxpayers to help pay for up-keep of European armies could perhaps hardly be expected to appeal to them. But in the case of Great Britain it is indeed strange that our Government fails to see how injurious its policy of refunding will be to those very interests which it exists to serve. The British Government, to date, owes this country \$407,303,382 in accrued interest on its borrowings. This amount it is now proposed to "refund." That means, supposedly, that the British Government would find it embarrassing to raise such an amount of money at this time. Yet the British naval estimates for the coming year, which were approved by the House of Commons in March, amounted to £91,186,869 gross, or about \$237,360,860 at the present rate of exchange, and of this amount £28 million or \$90,520,000 is to be expended on four new capital ships, the British Admiralty's share in the three-cornered armament race. Sir L. Worthington Evans in his report on European armaments, either intentionally or through an oversight, failed to give the numerical strength of the British army, and we have at hand no statement of British military expenditure; but since it is notorious that it is enormously greater than the £28 million spent in 1914, it is safe to reckon that the British army and navy together are

costing something near \$500 million yearly. This is a goodly sum to be expended in non-productive enterprises by a nation so poor that it can not raise so much as a shilling of the interest on its foreign obligations.¹

The long and short of it is that this country is contributing a goodly sum each year to the support of the British army and navy; and this, to every one but the internationalist munitions-makers who get their profit no matter who loses, must seem extremely foolish. If the jingo elements in this country are really ambitious to outstrip all competitors in the building of a navy, it must strike them as doubtful policy to be aiding the strongest of those competitors to build against us; doubtful, that is, to every one but the makers of armour-plate. To the American taxpayers who are thus paying for two navies instead of one, it must seem that their Government is imposing a needlessly severe burden upon them; but the opinion of taxpayers, when that opinion is unorganized, is notoriously a matter of indifference to officeholders. However, when one considers that the rivalry in the Pacific, about which Premier Hughes of Australia was so explicit the other day, represents the rivalry of American and British and Japanese privileged interests; and furthermore, when one considers that the clash, when it comes, may possibly be between America on the one side and an alliance of Great Britain and Japan on the other; when one considers these things it looks like nothing short of madness on the part of the Government of the United States to continue its grants-in-aid to the support of the British navy. If it is building its own navy for business purposes and not merely to furnish occupation to the international armament-ring, its most practical course in the matter of its foreign loans would be to make its demand for payment so insistent that refusal would amount to a declaration of bankruptcy on the part of its debtors. This would have the salutary effect of forcing European Governments to face the stern realities of their economic situation; it might save American taxpayers an enormous amount of money; and furthermore, by the Eternal, it might save the "greatest navy on earth" a possible trouncing in the theatre of the next great conflict, the Pacific Ocean.

DISARMAMENT OR NEW ALIGNMENTS?

THE doubts we have expressed regarding the success of Mr. Harding's disarmament conference are not dictated by pessimism, as some of our friends would have it, but by a feeling grounded in long experience that little good can come from the activities of governmental agents. One has but to reflect on the outcome of the Hague conferences to realize the difficulties that arise when humanitarian motives encounter the cold facts of national policy.

It is no secret that the Western Powers habitually use their diplomatic machinery to assist commercial and financial groups to get possession of coveted natural resources at the ends of the earth, and to force loans upon weak nations at usurious rates of interest. Our chief reason for refusing to consider such a policy as answering to the demands of enlightened self-interest is that it leads inevitably to conflict between nations and mutual loss. It is interesting to observe in this

connexion that the Soviet Government has lately entered upon a new policy by relinquishing in China and in Persia material advantages which had been secured by conquest in Tsarist days, and by cutting the chains which bound the border States to the Russia of the old regime. These innovations have no doubt been resorted to in order to gain prestige in the East as an offset to Western hostility; but it is worthy of note that the attempt to apply some measure of ordinary decency and morality to international relations has proved to be the part of worldly wisdom. Such a course, if persisted in, must lead eventually to lasting peace and concord. It is significant that the attempt was first made in circumstances that had removed private interests from the field of diplomacy. The Russians have only to apply the same principle to their domestic concerns to bring about disarmament as a natural development of the rule of freedom.

If there were any evidence that the Powers that are to be represented at the green table in Washington were ready to follow the example of Russia in their dealings with weaker nations, this paper would be more hopeful of the results; for a solution of the colonial problem might then be looked for along the lines of self-determination. The Philippines, Haiti and Santo Domingo, India and Egypt, Algiers and Morocco, Shantung and Korea, would be relieved of the burden of foreign occupation, and might be induced in their turn to adopt a system of reciprocity based on the open port. Disarmament would then enter the realm of practical politics. It is not peaceful merchantmen that need navies for protection, but buccaneers. Warships ostentatiously appearing in foreign ports are more often than not playing the game of special interests. The description of a correspondent in *Foreign Affairs* might be applied in a general way to any of the great Powers. The British Empire, he declared, is in reality a small syndicate which should be called "The British Empire Company, Limited"; a combination which has used the British army and navy to fight something like fifty wars in the last seventy years.

The balance of power among the great nations has been upset by the conflict that it induced, and the forthcoming disarmament conference will exhibit the victorious nations manœuvring for new alignments. Mr. E. D. Morel has pointed out that the United States, in spite of the consortium, is committed to the support of Chinese independence and integrity, and is therefore in danger of coming into conflict with Japan on that score if not over the question of Yap or the California issue. Germany having been eliminated, the United States looms up as the chief shadow on the British Empire. "By a curious turn of the wheel of fortune," says Mr. Morel, "America, in 1921, in a case where the stakes are vastly greater, is finding herself as regards China in very much the same position as Germany found herself as regards Morocco in 1905 and again in 1911." The optimists who in those years shut their eyes to the economic forces which were then at work, and spoke smooth words about conferences and understandings, did not help the cause of peace.

In so far as the discussion at Washington is carried on openly it will help to an understanding of the complicated issues involved; and even if its tangible results are meagre, the habit of international consultation will have been strengthened, as in the case of the meetings at the Hague. There is always, furthermore, a thousand-to-one chance that a momentum will be developed which will sweep the participants beyond the limits of traditional diplomacy. But to be effective the

¹SINCE this editorial went into type, Senator Borah has said in the Senate that according to figures furnished him, Great Britain is expending \$765 million annually for the support of the British navy, and \$1,968 million for the support of the various British armies. The Senator states that it is costing Great Britain \$40 million per month to maintain her armies in Mesopotamia alone; and he estimates that we are virtually loaning foreign countries nearly one million dollars per day, through failure to collect our debts. We quote from the report of the Senator's speech which appeared in the *New York World* of 26 July.—EDITORS.

movement would have to be supported by a greater and more intelligent popular enthusiasm than can yet be detected in this or any other country. It would take a sentiment of revolutionary proportions to overcome the inertia of politics and carry the day for the measures of international reciprocity which must precede any real reversal of the policy of military preparedness. Even if a partial disarmament were agreed upon, it would prove illusory so long as business syndicates in every nation seek, with the help of their Foreign Office, to secure lucrative monopolies in undeveloped countries; and so long as foreigners are everywhere discriminated against, whether they seek to aid in production or to carry on trade. One may exercise one's imagination in computing the persuasive power necessary to induce our own Government to cease building battleships, cease preparing for chemical warfare, cease erecting tariff-walls, cease turning back the tide of immigration, cease maintaining an inferior status for aliens, and cease holding half-a-dozen conquered countries in leash. Such a demand would be almost equivalent to asking the politician to sign his own dismissal; for if the general will were once to become conscious of its power it would soon put an end to nine-tenths of the present functions of government, and do on its own responsibility, and with at least a glimmering understanding of its own needs, what is now done for it so expensively and so badly.

The fact that such a power is latent in every society gives to the approaching international conference in Washington an interest that it would otherwise lack; for the discussions begun by the blind rulers of yesterday may be carried further than they planned if the popular apathy is once dispelled. But whether the results of such an awakening would be good or evil is another question, the answer to which depends on the amount of enlightenment and vision accompanying the emotional force.

THE FAMINES OF RUSSIA.

ALTHOUGH as a general thing a non-partisan Providence makes the rain to fall alike upon the just and the unjust, an exception must be made in the case of Russia, where the Bolsheviks are somehow to blame when the ground-hog sees his shadow, or the seed-corn rots in the ground. Such at any rate, is the impression created by the common editorial practice of holding the Bolsheviks responsible whenever the peasants fail for any reason to produce food enough for themselves, or to deliver a surplus to the towns. Naturally this interpretation of the news is put in jeopardy by any admission that the misbehaviour of the elements may mitigate the guilt of the Bolsheviks, for such an admission may suggest the advisability of a search for other conditions affecting the production and distribution of food, which are not directly attributable to Bolshevik activity or entirely subject to Bolshevik control.

Recent report of drought and famine in Russia have put us in the mood for such an inquiry, which may properly begin, we think, with an examination of conditions in the good old days when the Bolsheviks had as little power in Russia as the Communist party has now in the United States. Very frequently our tory friends take occasion to remind us that in the pre-revolutionary era of peace and plenty, Russia was a grain-exporting country; which is, of course, the truth, but not the whole truth. At least Mr. H. N. Brailsford believes that it is not the whole truth, for in his recently published volume on "The Russian Workers'

Republic" he states that the surplus of grain for export

came solely from the Ukraine, the Volga Valley, the Caucasus, and Siberia. Central and Northern Russia were never at the best of times self-supporting, and it is only over these regions, which have always had a food deficit, that Bolshevik rule has been uninterrupted. Their problem was to feed a country which never in Tsarist days had come near to feeding itself.

This statement is doubtless capable of statistical proof, and yet our case does not rest upon the establishment of this proof. Whatever may have been true of the several regions of Russia, each considered as a unit, it is quite certain that a large proportion of the peasants themselves were unable to maintain their own lives by agriculture alone. At the time of the emancipation, in 1861, the peasants had been expropriated from a part of the land they had occupied as serfs, and excessive redemption dues had been imposed upon the lands allotted to them as freedmen. Heavily handicapped at the outset by these conditions, the *mushiks* were quite unable to increase their holdings in proportion to the increase in their numbers, and at the end of half a century of "freedom," the average size of the plots occupied by peasant families was only a little more than half what it had been at the time of the emancipation. In "The Russian Peasant and the Revolution," Mr. Hindus says that in 1905

in forty-seven provinces of European Russia, out of the 11,956,876 peasant households, twenty-three per cent had less than five dessiatines [13.5 acres] per household, and seventy per cent had less than ten dessiatines [twenty-seven acres] per household, whereas according to the computation of Government experts the average family required at least 12.5 dessiatines [33.75 acres] to provide it with adequate sustenance.

Writing in 1904, Mr. Geoffrey Drage said that only 8.9 per cent of the peasantry could spare any of their agricultural products for sale, while 70.7 per cent could not produce enough food to meet their own needs. Such being the case, it is obvious that some of the food which the peasants themselves consumed, as well as a considerable proportion of the surplus exported to the towns and abroad, was produced on the estates which remained in the hands of the landlords.

For their insufficient allotments, the peasants were obliged to pay an extortionate price. One authority estimates that at the prevailing market-price, the redeemed lands were worth 689 millions of roubles. The valuations actually fixed for redemption-purposes came to 923 millions, and by reason of the accumulations of interest, fines for delayed payments, and other like charges, the peasants had already paid down a total of 1,390 millions of roubles when further payments were cancelled at the time of the revolution in 1905. In its capacity as real estate agent for the nobles who had formerly held title to the redeemed lands, the Government had thus collected from the peasants a sum in excess of the value of these lands which was in effect a personal ransom. With allotments which would not yield enough food to keep body and soul together, much less produce a surplus to cover the redemption-dues and the indirect taxes which replaced them in 1905, many of the peasants were driven to domestic competition with new factory-industries, and masses of them were dumped wholesale into the labour-market of an industrially backward country, where their part-time work on the landlords' estates and in the factories kept wages close to the level of starvation. Even the peasants' expedient of dividing their time between wage-work and the cultivation of their own lands did not save them from periodic disaster; thus, in 1911 a crop-failure brought on famine, and the central and local authorities extended relief to eight million people.

To our way of thinking, it was primarily the near-starvation of the peasant food-producers of Russia that turned the respectable revolution of the Cadets into an economic earthquake. The Provisional Government had hardly come to power when the peasants began a *jacquerie* which was to continue indefinitely, without regard to the ineffectual opposition of the pre-Bolsheviks, or the superfluous approval of the Bolsheviks themselves.

Whether the Government condemned or subscribed to the seizure of the landlords' estates, the peasant uprising was preparing the way for a civil war in which the *mushiks* would belong to one party, and the dispossessed landlords to the other; nor was it to be expected that industry and transportation could escape the ruinous effects of this civil war, whatever might be the disposition of the industrial workers and the Government. If the pre-war misery of the peasants was inevitable, then the agrarian revolution was inevitable: the shortage of imported and domestic manufactures to be offered in exchange for farm-produce was inevitable; and neither requisition nor "free trade" could forestall the famine in the towns, which was likewise inevitable.

By their direct attack upon the old land-system, the peasants themselves have cleared away the chief obstacle to their own well-being. As a class, they are now able to produce on their own lands all the food which they formerly produced, plus the surplus which they were obliged to purchase from the landlords. Many observers have reported that they have taken advantage of their new opportunities to such an extent that they are now better fed than they ever were in pre-revolutionary times. The pinch comes when drought or flood destroys the crops in a particular district, and forces the peasants to depend, as the towns must always depend, upon sources of supply over which they have no direct control. It is then, and then only, that the peasant as a food-consumer feels the effects of conditions in industry and transport which he himself, as a food-producer, has done so much to create.

In all this, there is very little that has to do with bolshevism. If the Bolsheviks could have prevented the starvation of the peasantry—in this grain-exporting country—in the days of the good Tsar Nicholas, they might have prevented the economic revolution and the subsequent starvation of many Russian townsmen, and of those peasants whom Providence occasionally tosses into the same dependent class with the dwellers in the towns. As things stand to-day, not what the Bolsheviks hope to do, but what the peasants have done is the chief factor in the Russian situation. If the opposition of the peasants to the Bolshevik regime has been by no means so fierce as their opposition to the ex-landlords, it is because the Bolsheviks have acquired in the work that the peasants themselves have done to relieve the starvation of their own class, the hundred and twenty million food-producers of the Old Empire.

FROM THE OBSERVATIONS OF FO WANG.

WHILE walking along the banks of the Kwang river, See Fun Yu observed a large square of piled-up tree-sections that had been sawed into equal lengths. "How these trees are shamed by uniformity!" he exclaimed. "Formerly the glory of each one consisted in its unique outline!"

NA SAI, wishing to curb the egotism of one of his pupils who claimed that the universe existed merely for the pleasure of man, told the following fable: A fly that made its home in the kitchen of a gourmand, was boasting one day to a new acquaintance from the outside world, "Do you see all those pots and pans into which the cook peeps at intervals? They contain

the most delicious food. Day after day these viands are prepared for me. At intervals a silver gong is rung. This is the signal for the pots to be removed from the fire and their contents set upon the table for me to eat. As there is always far too large a quantity for me to consume, I do not object to the fact that the remainder of the food is eaten by the man who dwells under this roof with me." The newcomer was greatly impressed by the recital of the house-fly and sniffed the air hungrily. "Remain here for dinner as my guest," continued the house-fly. "In a little while the gong will ring and we can dine sociably together." The visitor gladly consented to this, and presently the lids of the pots were removed and their contents poured into dishes. "Come, my friend, and taste this incomparable soup," said the house-fly leading the way. "There is a cool drop of it on the edge of this plate. Do not be backward. Begin!" In another moment the two were sipping the soup daintily. They had taken but a few mouthfuls when the cook spied them. Brandishing the pot that he held in his hand he shouted angrily, "Be off with you, abominable insects!" and forthwith drove the pair out of the window, carefully closing it after them so as to bar their return. The house-fly, deeply chagrined, and puzzled as well, remarked to his astonished guest, "The cook is, as you see, a man of insane temper. It is well to humour such people a bit. Perhaps we seated ourselves too soon. Come again to-morrow, and we will not be so precipitate in dining."

AN old man in my village being asked for his opinion of a very handsome ring worn by Tsao-Lin, a wealthy lord of the province, replied, "Such showy baubles render their wearer both vulgar and ridiculous." "Do you mean," asked his questioner, somewhat offended by this tart answer, "that you, yourself, would not own such a ring if you were Tsao Lin?" "If I were a wealthy lord like Tsao-Lin, perchance I would," retorted the old man. "But, being poor as I am, is it not better for me to cultivate a contemptuous indifference towards that which I can in no wise afford?"

BLANCHE GOODMAN.

ABOLISHING THE NUISANCE-TAXES.

A LIGHT has begun to flicker in the fiscal darkness that usually envelopes the United States Congress. Possibly this flicker will eventually become steadily luminous. At any rate, especially at this period of general consternation about taxes, it is worth looking at in a prayerful mood. This potential source of illumination comes from four points in a cluster, like the light from an old-time chandelier. Literally, the points are four Congressional bills which Representative Keller, a Republican independent from Minnesota, has lately submitted to Congress for its consideration.

The first of these bills would repeal the excess-profits tax, the ten-per-cent tax on corporations, all transportation-taxes—in a word, all the "nuisance-taxes" from which the public, as well as business in its own right, suffers. Under this bill of Representative Keller's, no internal-revenue taxes at all would be retained except such as are for regulatory purposes, inclusive of those for discouraging the peonage of children—one might even go to a theatre without suffering any internal-revenue drainage at the box office. Who could possibly object to such a sweeping abolition of irritating, burdensome, obstructive taxes, which—with apologies to the memory of Sydney Smith—spread themselves clear across the span of human life from the sugar-teat of the suckling to the coffin containing its body worn out with age; taxes that plunder the poor, harass the rich, turn business upside down and yield to the government only a small share of what they extort from the public?

To Mr. Keller's proposal for such a complete abolition of taxes in itself there could, of course, be little objection. The Federal Government, however, must have an income from some source. Learned men frequently remind us that death and taxes are inevitable, thereby seeming to imply, not only that they are both

calamitous in their nature, but that they are in their very essence arbitrary and only to be endured as necessary evils. Whether or not that be true of death, this is no place for discussing it; but so far as it applies to taxes, it is not true. Although taxes are inevitable, they need not be arbitrary; and so far from being evils to be endured by any, they could be made blessings for the benefit of all.

The delusion that taxes are necessarily a burden, receives plausibility only from their historical background. The prevailing methods of taxation originated in levies of tribute exacted by the strong from the weak. The conqueror always plundered the conquered. As conquest became unfashionable, taxation got to be the price of representation. But never—so slow are we to recognize natural laws outside of physics—never has there come a realization of the truth that taxes can be conveniently and scientifically levied by governments, just as prices are levied by merchants, for value received. There is really no business difference, theoretical or practical, between paying a democratic government the value of what it supplies you with, and paying a business man or a wage-worker the value of the service he renders you. It is this consideration that underlies Mr. Keller's taxation bills. They at least indicate a drift away from the tribute-theory of taxation to the compensatory theory.

Having by his first bill proposed the abolition of Federal tribute-taxes, Mr. Keller's first proposal for substitute-taxes is set out in his second bill, which amends the income-tax law so as to distinguish "earned" from "unearned" incomes. For the "unearned" income it has no mercy; *but it reduces by one-half all existing taxes on the "earned" income.*

Representative Keller's second proposal for new taxes to take the place of those which his first bill would abolish, is set out in his third bill, which would radically alter Federal taxation of inheritances. This bill like the other proceeds along the lines of the tribute-theory of taxation. It makes no discrimination at all in favour of the "earner." No matter what the origin of the inheritance may be, Mr. Keller would tax it if it were in excess of \$20,000. From that point, however, up to \$35,000, his tax would be only one per cent. It would not rise above six per cent on estates less than \$250,000; but on those of \$100,000,000 or more the tax would be ninety per cent. But even ninety per cent would leave ten million dollars to the lucky heir; and ten millions is a tidy sum even for a confiscatory remnant. It must be conceded, however, that in this bill Mr. Keller with his percentages is favouring the lucky poor at the expense of the lucky rich—poor and rich by comparison—but that is what the present law also does, and if tribute-levying must continue to be the principle of taxation, why not levy taxes lightly on those least able to pay? Is this not in substantial conformity with that "principle" of taxation which scholastic economists have been driving home, lo, these many years; the principle, namely: that taxation should be in proportion to ability to pay?

The fourth of Mr. Keller's correlative bills utilizes the principle of constitutional law by which Federal inheritance-taxes are sustained irrespective of the distribution of population. This fourth bill proposes an annual excise-tax of one per cent on land-values in excess, in each holding, of ten thousand dollars. By putting this proposal in the form of an excise-tax for the privilege of monopolizing natural resources of extraordinary value, this acute business-man member of Congress avoids the constitutional requirement that di-

rect taxes must be levied in each State in proportion to its relative population to the population of the United States. He proceeds upon the theory that he is not proposing a direct tax. Arguing by analogy, he concludes that if legalization of an inheritance is a privilege subject to excise-taxation, then the legalization of monopolies of natural resources of excessive values is also an excisable privilege. Whether or not he is legally right in this theory of constitutional law can be settled only by the Supreme Court after his law is enacted.

In this, the fourth of his correlative proposals, Mr. Keller distinctly substitutes for the autocratic principle of taxation by tribute-levying, the democratic principle of taxation in proportion to value received. Though his proposed measure but barely suggests the latter principle—since one per cent on values in excess of ten thousand dollars is but a minute proportion of the financial advantage of monopolizing natural resources—it nevertheless does make the principle explicit. A tax on natural-resource values, whether mineral deposits or forest-areas or water-power privileges or city building-sites, can not be evaded by shifting them in higher prices from owners to consumers. In that respect, the proposed tax would resemble inheritance- and income-taxes, but with an additional virtue: it would fasten the tax not only upon those who pay it, but upon those who ought to pay it. They ought to pay it because it is financial compensation to government for what government does financially for them. For every service that government renders is financially reflected in the values of monopolized natural resources. A familiar open-country example appears in the increased money-values which highway-improvements add to adjacent estates. City examples appear abundantly in the building-lot values which municipal betterments stimulate.

The contribution to public expenses which such an excise-tax as Mr. Keller is now proposing would bring, may be inferred from a glance at some of the sources from which it would flow. No less than forty-four per cent of the anthracite-coal deposits in this country, as Mr. Keller finds, is monopolized by one railway-company. One manufacturing concern monopolizes 60,000 acres of Connellsville coal, the money-value of which soars above \$50,000 an acre. Iron ore, copper, lead and oil deposits are likewise monopolized by a few concentrated private interests. Of natural timber-resources about a quarter of the supply in the Pacific North-west is monopolized by thirty-seven beneficiaries of this particular privilege, and in the pine region of the South sixty-seven beneficiaries monopolize thirty-nine per cent of one of the most important species. More than one-half of the water-power which is in use throughout the United States is to-day controlled by eighteen corporations, and an amount of natural water-power equal to four-fifths of all that has been developed is held *out of use* by 120 corporations. Yet with all this the story of natural-resource monopoly is but partly told.

Are there any but profiteering-reasons for exempting such enormous monopolies of our natural resources from taxation? Inasmuch as most of them would be valueless—not useless, but without money-value—were it not for the privileges conferred by government upon those who monopolize the natural resources of the nation, why should even profiteers object to Mr. Keller's trifling excise-tax of only one per cent of the values in excess of ten thousand dollars?

Trifling, indeed, is such a tax when it is considered as the annual price to be paid for monopolizing so great a value in natural resources. But its yield would

not be trifling in the aggregate. It would not only enable Congress to abolish all the "nuisance-taxes," from excess profits down to theatre tickets and soda-counter refreshments, and to cut in half the income-tax on incomes that are earned, but, if put into operation together with Mr. Keller's second and third proposals in this series, it would lift the Federal treasury out of its present state of bankruptcy.

That probability appears from a comparison of the estimates of the Secretary of the Treasury for the next fiscal year with Mr. Keller's estimates. As originally made, the Secretary's estimate revealed a probable deficit of nearly twenty millions. But Mr. Keller revises that estimate on the basis of subsequent appropriations and of his own proposals for altering our taxation-laws. As to income-taxes (including the profits-tax), he shows that his amendment would probably reduce the Secretary's estimate of receipts by nearly one-half; the inheritance-taxes also by a large amount. Yet under his correlative bills Mr. Keller estimates that there would be a treasury-surplus of more than a quarter of a billion instead of a deficiency, and in this hopeful estimate the gross income to be derived from Mr. Keller's proposed tax on the values of excessive privileges in the monopolization of natural resources figures at no less than 960 millions of dollars.

One can not read Mr. Keller's bills and his full and precise explanations of them without realizing that he is in deadly earnest and is abundantly armed and fortified for the combat he has challenged. His is no mere idealistic agitation. He is a business man who has awakened to the vital difference between business and monopoly. He sees that the prevailing methods of taxation are destructive of business interests and are promotive only of monopolistic profiteering. Anticipating the artful appeal of the monopolists to the farmers, Mr. Keller has warded it off by his ten-thousand-dollar exemption of natural-resource values and by his exemption of all improvement- and cultivation-values, so that more than ninety-five per cent of the farmers of the United States would be free from his tax. Realizing the bedlamite taxation in which both farmers and business men are now entangled, he has undertaken to clear away the worst of it and to weaken the rest, while vitalizing the principle of public revenue as *pro-rata* compensation for special benefits.

When such a grotesque proposal as the "sales-tax" could get for a time what seemed to be a favourable hearing, notwithstanding the effect it would obviously have of greatly increasing commodity-prices and solidifying commercial monopolies—a proposal which, fortunately for the American people, has at last gone into the trash-can, less than a hundred Congressmen being willing to touch it even for its junk value—since such a profiteering proposal was able to command a measure of respectful attention, it would be a reflection upon American common sense if Representative Keller's programme were ignored.

LOUIS F. POST.

THE MYTH OF A GUILTY NATION: III

IF the theory upon which the treaty of Versailles is based, the theory of a single guilty nation, were true, there would be no trouble about saying what the war was fought for. The Allied belligerents would have a simple, straight story to tell; they could describe their aims and intentions clearly in a few words that anyone could understand, and their story would be

reasonably consistent and not vary greatly from year to year. It would be practically the same story in 1918 as in 1915 or at any time between. In America, indeed, the story did not vary much up to the spring of 1917, for the reason that this country was pretty much in the dark about European international relations. Once our indignation and sympathies were aroused, it was for the propagandists mostly a matter of keeping them as hot as possible. Few had the information necessary to discount the plain, easy, understandable story of a robber nation leaping upon an unprepared and defenceless Europe for no cause whatever except the lofty ambition, as Mr. Joseph Choate said, "to establish a world-empire upon the ruins of the British Empire." Those who had this information could not make themselves heard; and thus it was that the propagandists had no need to vary the one story that was most useful to their purpose of keeping us in a state of unreasoning indignation, and accordingly they did not vary it.

In Europe and in England, however, the case was different. International relations were better understood by those who were closer to them than we were; more questions were raised and more demands made. Hence the Allied politicians and propagandists were kept busy upon the defensive. When from time to time the voice of popular discontent or of some influential body of opinion insisted on a statement of the causes of the war or of the war-aims of the Allies, they were confronted with the politician's traditional difficulty. They had to say something plausible and satisfactory, which yet must be something that effectively hid the truth of the situation. As the war hung on, their difficulty became desperate and they threw consistency to the winds, telling any sort of story that would enable them for the moment to "get by." The publication of the secret treaties which had been seized out of the quagmire of the old Russian Foreign Office by the revolutionists made no end of trouble for them. It is amusing now to remember how promptly these treaties were branded by the British Foreign Office as forgeries; especially since it turned out that the actual terms of the armistice—not the nominal terms, but the actual terms—were the terms of the secret treaties! The publication of the secret treaties in this country did not contribute much towards a disillusionment of the public; the press as a rule ignored or lied about them, they were not widely read, and few who did read them had enough understanding of European affairs to interpret them. But abroad they put a good deal of fat in the fire; and this was a specimen of the kind of thing that the Allied politicians had to contend with in their efforts to keep their peoples in line.

The consequence was that the official and semi-official statements of the causes of the war and of the war-aims of the Allies are a most curious hotchpotch. In fact, if anyone takes stock in the theory of the one guilty nation and is therefore convinced that the treaty of Versailles is just and proper and likely to enforce an enduring peace, I could suggest nothing better than that he should go through the literature of the war, pick out these statements, put them in parallel columns, and see how they look. If the war originated in the unwarranted conspiracy of a robber nation, if the aims of the Allies were to defeat that conspiracy and render it impotent and to chastise and tie the hands of the robber nation—and that is the theory of the treaty of Versailles—can anyone in his right mind suppose that the Allied politicians and propagandists would ever give out or need to give out these ludicrously contra-

dictory and inconsistent explanations and statements? When one has a simple, straight story to tell, and a most effective story, why complicate it and undermine it and throw all sorts of doubts upon it by venturing upon all sorts of public utterances that will not square with it in any conceivable way? Politicians, of all men, never lie for the fun of it; their available margin of truth is always so narrow that they keep within it when they can. Mr. Lloyd George, for example, is one of the cleverest of politicians. I have already quoted his two statements; first, that of 4 August, 1917:

What are we fighting for? To defeat the most dangerous conspiracy ever plotted against the liberty of nations; carefully, skilfully, insidiously, clandestinely planned in every detail with ruthless, cynical determination.

—and then that of 3 March, 1921:

For the Allies, German responsibility for the war is fundamental. It is the basis upon which the structure of the treaty of Versailles has been erected, and if that acknowledgment is repudiated or abandoned, the treaty is destroyed. . . . German responsibility for the war must be treated by the Allies as a *chose jugée*.

A little over two months before Mr. George made this latter utterance, on 32 December, 1920, he said this:

The more one reads memoirs and books written in the various countries of what happened before the first of August, 1914, the more one realizes that no one at the head of affairs quite meant war at that stage. It was something into which they glided, or rather staggered and stumbled, perhaps through folly; and a discussion, I have no doubt, would have averted it.

Well, it would strike an unprejudiced person that if this were true, there is a great deal of doubt put upon Mr. Lloyd George's former statements by Mr. Lloyd George himself. Persons who plot carefully, skilfully, insidiously and clandestinely, do not glide; they do not stagger or stumble, especially through folly. They keep going, as we in America were assured that the German Government did keep going, right up to The Day of their own choosing. Moreover, they are not likely to be headed off by discussion; highwaymen are notoriously curt in their speech and if one attempts discussion with them they become irritable and peremptory. This is the invariable habit of highwaymen. Besides, if discussion would have averted war in 1914, why was it not forthcoming? Certainly not through any fault of the Austrian Government, which made every concession, as the British Ambassador's report shows, notwithstanding its grievance against Serbia was a just one. Certainly not through any fault of the German Government, which never refused discussion and held its hand with all the restraint possible under the circumstances described in my last paper. Well, then, how is it so clear that German responsibility for the war should be treated as a *chose jugée*?

People who have a clear and simple case do not talk this way. Picking now at random among the utterances of politicians and propagandists, we find an assorted job-lot of aims assigned and causes alleged, and in all of them there is that curious, incomprehensible and callous disregard of the power of conviction that a straight story always exercises, if you have one to tell. In November, 1917, Lord Robert Cecil in the House of Commons, when the Foreign Office was being pestered by demands for a statement of the Allied war-aims, said that the restitution of Alsace and Lorraine to France was a "well-understood war-aim from the moment we entered the war." As things have turned out, it is an odd coincidence how so many of these places that have iron or coal or oil in them seem to represent a well-understood war-aim. Less than

a month before, in October, 1917, General Smuts said that to his mind the one great dominating war-aim was "the end of militarism, the end of standing armies." Well, the Allies won the war, but judging by results, this dominating war-aim seems rather to have been lost sight of. Mr. Lloyd George again on another occasion, said in the House of Commons that "self-determination was one of the principles for which we entered the war. . . a principle from which we have never departed since the beginning of the war." This, too, seems an aim that for some reason the victorious nations have not quite realized; indeed in some cases, as in Ireland, for example, there has been no great alacrity shown about trying to realize it. Viscount Bryce said that the war sprang from the strife of races and religions in the Balkan countries, and from the violence done to the sentiment of nationality in Alsace-Lorraine which made France the ally of Russia. But the fact is that France became the ally of Russia on the basis of hard cash, and since the Russian Revolution, she has been a bit out of luck by way of getting her money back. Mr. Asquith in the House of Commons, 3 August, 1914, said:

If I am asked what we are fighting for, I reply in two sentences. In the first place, to fulfil a solemn international obligation. . . . Secondly we are fighting . . . to vindicate the principle that small nationalities are not to be crushed in defiance of international good faith.

Just so: and in the House of Commons, 20 December, 1917, he said:

The League of Nations . . . was the avowed purpose, the very purpose . . . for which we entered the war and for which we are continuing the war,

You pays your money, you see, and takes your choice. The point to be made, however, is that one who has a strong case, a real case, never trifles with it in this way. Would the reader do it?

Mr. Asquith's citation of a "solemn international obligation" refers to the so-called Belgian treaties. It will be remembered that the case of Belgium was the great winning card played by the Allied Governments for the stakes of American sympathies; and therefore this paper may properly end with a survey, somewhat in detail, of the status of Belgium at the outset of the war.

Belgium had learned forty years ago how she stood under the treaties of 1831 and 1839. When in the late 'eighties there was likelihood of a Franco-German war, the question of England's participation under these treaties was thoroughly discussed, and it was shown conclusively that England was not obligated. Perhaps the best summary of the case was that given by Mr. W. T. Stead in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the issues of 4 and 5 February, 1887. After an examination of the treaties of 1831, 1839 and 1870—an examination unfortunately too long to be quoted here—Mr. Stead briefly sums up the result of his investigation in the following statement:

There is therefore no English guarantee to Belgium. It is possible perhaps, to 'construct' such a guarantee; but the case may be summed up as follows: (1) England is under no guarantee whatever except such as is common to Austria, France, Russia and Germany; (2) that guarantee is not specifically of the neutrality of Belgium at all; and (3) is given, not to Belgium but to the Netherlands.

This was the official view of the British Government at the time, and it is reflected in the celebrated letter signed "Diplomaticus" in the *Standard* of 4 February, to which Mr. Stead refers; which, indeed, he makes the guiding text for his examination. The *Standard*

was then the organ of Lord Salisbury's Government, and it is as nearly certain as anything of the sort can be, that the letter signed "Diplomaticus" was written by the hand of the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury himself.

How Mr. Asquith's Government in August 1914 came suddenly to extemporize a wholly different view of England's obligations to Belgium is excellently told by that inveterate diarist and chronicler, Mr. Wilfred Scawen Blunt:

The obligation of fighting in alliance with France in case of a war with Germany concerned the honour of three members only of Asquith's Cabinet, who alone were aware of the exact promises that had been made. These, though given verbally and with reservations as to the consent of Parliament, bound the three as a matter of personal honour, and were understood at the Quai d'Orsay as binding the British nation. Neither Asquith nor his two companions¹ in this inner Cabinet could have retained office had they gone back from their word in spirit or in letter. It would also doubtless have entailed a serious quarrel with the French Government had they failed to make it good. So clearly was the promise understood at Paris to be binding that President Poincaré, when the crisis came, had written to King George reminding him of it as an engagement made between the two nations which he counted on His Majesty to keep.

Thus faced, the case was laid before the Cabinet, but was found to fail as a convincing argument for war. It was then that Asquith, with his lawyer's instinct, at a second Cabinet meeting brought forward the neutrality of Belgium as a better plea than the other to lay before a British jury, and by representing the neutrality-treaties of 1831 and 1839 as entailing an obligation on England to fight (of which the text of the treaties contains no word) obtained the Cabinet's consent, and war was declared.

Belgium was not thought of by the British Cabinet before 2 August, 1914. She was brought in then as a means of making the war go down with the British people. The fact is that Belgium was thoroughly prepared for war, thoroughly prepared for just what happened to her. Belgium was a party to the military arrangements effected among France, England and Russia; for this we have the testimony of Marshal Joffre before the Metallurgic Committee in Paris, and also the record of the "conversations" that were carried on in Brussels between the Belgian chief of staff and Lt.-Col. Barnardiston. On 24 July, 1914, the day when the Austrian note was presented to Serbia (the note of which Sir E. Grey had gotten a forecast as early as 16 July by telegraph from the British Ambassador at Vienna, Sir M. de Bunsen), the Belgian Foreign Minister, M. Davignon, promptly dispatched to all the Belgian embassies an identical communication containing the following statement, the significance of which is revealed by a glance at the map:

All necessary steps to ensure respect of Belgian neutrality have nevertheless been taken by the Government. The Belgian army has been mobilized and is taking up such strategic positions as have been chosen to secure the defence of the country and the respect of its neutrality. The forts of Antwerp and on the Meuse have been put in a state of defence.

It was on the eastern frontier, we perceive, therefore—not on the western, where Belgium might have been invaded by France—that all the available Belgian military force was concentrated. Hence, to pretend any longer that the Belgian Government was surprised by the action of Germany, or unprepared to meet it; to picture Germany and Belgium as cat and mouse, to understand the position of Belgium otherwise than that she was one of four solid allies under definite agreement worked out in complete practical detail, is merely absurd.

HISTORICUS.

¹ Sir E. Grey and Lord Haldane.

WITHOUT BENEFIT OF CLERGY.

VII. THE CLOWN OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

How the wife of Pontius Pilate must have reproached herself as that great throng began to surge toward the place of crucifixion! Long did she watch, perhaps, the progress of the trial of Jesus from a secluded post of observation. She must have seen the Master brought before her husband. The theologians of our time have erected one of their controversies around a significant reiteration of Pilate's chief question: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" It occurs again and again like the curse-theme in the "Flying Dutchman." Mark makes it prominent, we are told, because his gospel was written to answer that question. There must be some echo here, argue the theologians of a controversy among the primitive followers of the Christ.

The wife of Pontius Pilate, knowing her man, wasted no thought upon imbecilities like these. The moment Pilate put that peculiar and pointed question, she caught his mood. It was the most characteristic of all his moods. She fell into a panic. She could not herself hurry out from her apartment into the presence of her husband as he looked grimly down upon those chief priests and elders and scribes, upon those multitudes in agitation, upon that silent prisoner. The wife of Pontius Pilate could do no more than send him a message at the critical moment. "Have thou nothing to do with that just man," she warned, "for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." But she worked no change in the mood of Pilate. His character was his destiny. His spirit in this tremendous hour was that of the fool in Lear when the storm raged, that of Juvenal when his supreme satire was penned.

No indictment of Pontius Pilate could tell more heavily against him than a reference to his intellectuality. The human intellect is in such disgrace just now! The essence of all that is tragical in the trial and condemnation of Jesus resides in the buffoonery with which the great intellect of Pontius Pilate has invested it. This is the capital fact and its subtlety escapes the theologians because they do not see that Pilate, being essentially a man of intellect, was necessarily a clown. The paradox is familiar enough in our everyday experience of our fellow creatures but it is impossible for a theologian to grasp it as an idea. That is why their elucidations of the gospels are so fantastic.

Let us consider a modern instance of the type to which Pontius Pilate belonged—the clown Grimaldi. It is likely enough that with the single exception of Pontius Pilate, Grimaldi was the greatest clown that ever lived. Iteration has staled the most famous of all the innumerable anecdotes of Grimaldi. A physician advised a melancholy patient whom he found one morning in his waiting-room to see Grimaldi—only to learn that he was addressing Grimaldi himself. It was aptly observed in his own day that the genius of Grimaldi was primarily that of the intellect. He was Pilate in cap and bells, wearing a foolish peaked cap, foolish peaked slippers and hitting heads with a foolish bladder. Pontius Pilate was Grimaldi in a toga, sitting in the seat of an ancient Roman procurator of Judæa, holding a priesthood in leash long enough to reveal his real bent to a victim of their malice with the query: "What is truth?"

All this is mere gibberish to a theologian. The elderly Scots lady who insisted that no theologian could be anything but a thief may have gone rather far, but we must remember that Burke thought metaphysicians necessarily and inevitably cruel and inhuman. Burke did not mean that metaphysicians are born cruel but that their studies make them so. The paradox, then, in the fact that a man of great mentality is always a clown and that a great clown is an intellectual giant, while strange, is not stranger than other paradoxes. At any rate, Pontius Pilate and Grimaldi are there to prove it, to say nothing of Gilbert K. Chesterton and Peter the Great, Socrates and Charlie Chaplin. They may get their

effects by playing with cap and bells or by playing with ideas or by playing with the destinies of nations or by playing with a hole in a fence.

Pontius Pilate got his effects by playing with the destinies of Christianity. This was his masterpiece in his peculiar line, exactly as the masterpiece of Grimaldi was the grim severity with which he opened the pantomime of Mother Goose at Covent Garden. The gravity of Grimaldi can have been no more amusing a hundred years ago than was centuries before him the gravity of the procurator of Judæa at the trial and condemnation of Jesus. The theologians have no sympathy for Pontius Pilate because they do not know that a true clown is always a tragic figure.

Pontius Pilate, accordingly, was a man of the highest genius. His theme, as a musician might say, was hatred of the Jews. He almost fell in love with Jesus because the Jews so hated him.

How subtly Pilate dramatizes this feeling and how gloriously the humour of the synoptic gospels emerges at this point in the very shadow of the crucifixion! Only a great clown could triumph over the difficulty of projecting himself through the majesty of John's tremendous manner and Pontius Pilate does even this. He turns all Jewry into mockery before our eyes. He puts a cap and bells on the high priest himself. He parades the scribes and the elders in the style of Barnum when he made his entry into an American city during the nineteenth century. The trial of Jesus is really a burlesque at the expense of Annas and Caiaphas. Every barb that the wit of Pilate can devise to render the religion of all Jewry everywhere a mockery in every age and clime is devised with unmistakable genius and in the finest comic spirit. The scene is transformed for our edification into something no less witching than the vicissitudes of Alice with the March hare and the hatter, for Lewis Carroll is another illustration of the eternal truth that the man of real intellect and the born clown are one and the same.

Off we go to Pilate when the high priest has rent his garment, and we discover at once that we are at the circus. With that very first question, the question that so agitates the theologians, Pilate reveals the splendour of his histrionic power. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Think of asking Mary, Queen of Scots, with perfect deference and with absolute seriousness, while Queen Elizabeth is by: "Are you the Queen of England?" The clown, lurking in that great mind, prompted an impeccable gravity of manner, a touch of Roman sternness in Pontius Pilate and we need not doubt that Grimaldi himself could not have done it better. The procurator of Judæa was waving his red flag with the art that conceals itself for the special benefit of that champing bull, the high priest. Pilate asked again and again: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Little he cared about the answer. He must goad not only the high priest but that whole mob of elders and scribes.

He was creating his mood. The heavy task of sustaining it had yet to come. Meanwhile the prisoner could be sent to Herod, for the bulls were sure to come snorting and pawing back, all bellowing for the main performance in the big ring. Herod saw right through the burlesque of this buffoonery. He was so delighted with the art of Pontius Pilate that, falling in with the spirit of the procurator of Judæa, he added a burlesque touch of his own. He put a gorgeous robe on the Galilean. Herod had no more animosity against Jesus than had Pilate, and to Pilate the trial served the purpose of those wanton bladders with which at the pantomime Grimaldi was wont to hit the man in the moon over the head, to hit him very, very seriously. If Herod went to bed roaring that night, it was not at the expense of Jesus. The cheap buffoons now were the chief priests and the elders, turned into performing elephants and trick poodles for the purpose of Pilate's circus and all comprehending perfectly what fools they looked in his grave eyes.

He did not throw off the mask until they all got back from their fool's errand. Until this moment he had been too much concerned with his art to concern himself

particularly with the prisoner. The business of Pilate was with his circus, the appearance of Jesus in the ring being incidental to the artistic triumph of the performance as a whole. There is little need to wonder at the silence of Jesus. The art of Pontius Pilate was impotent in his case. Their perception of this truth goaded the clerical factions to fury. It must have seemed so like a tacit conspiracy, the procurator of Judæa in league with the Son of Man to make a jest of all the priestcraft of Jewry. The clergy on that stage appreciated perfectly what no contemporary theologian seems able to grasp—the circumstance that Pontius Pilate had no anxiety at all to save Jesus from the crucifixion. He had no objection to the release of this prisoner if matters chanced to take that turn. To say that he was trying to get Jesus off when he suggested this, that and the other is to misunderstand Pilate's jest at the expense of Jewry. Pilate was indifferent regarding the fate of Jesus, and he must have seen that Jesus himself did not care what they did to him or about him. Pontius Pilate, the most adroit anti-Semite in history, was driving the high priest around and around the ring and now he hit him on the head again with that bladder.

The procurator calmly announced that he would whip Jesus and let him go. Well the clown understood what an uproar his suggestion—made with that perfectly killing gravity of his—would precipitate. He who had declared that he was to sit on the right hand of the power of God, he who announced himself as the way, the truth and the life, was to have nothing more than a forefinger shaken in his face and he was only to be told with the clown-like severity of Pontius Pilate: "Naughty boy—go home!" The bulls were all bellowing before Pilate was through with that red flag of his. They had a custom, he reminded them, with all his owlish grimness, that at the Passover some wretch should be let out of his prison. How lucky that Jesus was just in time to get the benefit of this practice! By way of pickling this little wound, Pilate, with an expression appropriate to the countenance of a person in a state of artless innocence, we may rest assured, referred to Jesus again as the King of the Jews. That red flag once more! There is nothing in all the long imposture of Tartuffe to compare with Pontius Pilate here. The procurator of Judæa has the whole immense gallery of Molière panting behind him and the clowns in Shakespeare all obliterated; and his supreme touch was yet to come!

They had begun to yell now. The cry was "Crucify him!" Pontius Pilate washed his hands in the presence of that crowd. The clown was in the ring again! They were still yelling all around him when Pilate asked with indifference to the detail that his mask was awry: "Shall I crucify your king?" They gave him tit for tat. "We have no king but Cæsar!" Pilate, without a grin, watched them as they led the prisoner away. Next he took a blank scroll and wrote upon it his immortal announcement to all who saw the form between those thieves that Jesus of Nazareth was King of the Jews.

It was the final jest as the clown, severe in cap and bells, stalked majestically off the scene. Poor Pierrot! His perfect art is wasted on our theologians but he got his red flag on the cross.

ALEXANDER HARVEY.

LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

THE MEXICAN TRINITY.

SIRS: Uneasiness grows here daily. We are having sudden deportations of foreign agitators, street riots and parades of workers carrying red flags. Plots thicken, thin, disintegrate in the space of thirty-six hours. A general was executed to-day for counter-revolutionary activities. There is fevered discussion in the newspapers as to the best means of stamping out Bolshevism, which is the inclusive term for all forms of radical work. Battles occur almost daily between Catholics and Socialists in many parts of the Republic: Morelia, Yucatan, Cam-

peche, Jalisco. In brief, a clamour of petty dissension almost drowns the complicated debate between Mexico and the United States.

It is fascinating to watch, but singularly difficult to record because events overlap, and the news of to-day may be stale before it reaches the border. It is impossible to write fully of the situation unless one belongs to that choice company of folk who can learn all about peoples and countries in a couple of weeks. We have had a constant procession of these strange people: they come dashing in, gather endless notes and dash out again and three weeks later their expert, definitive opinions are published. Marvellous! I have been here for seven months, and for quite six of these I have not been sure of what the excitement is all about. Indeed, I am not yet able to say whether my accumulated impression of Mexico is justly proportioned; or that if I write with profound conviction of what is going on I shall not be making a profoundly comical mistake. The true story of a people is not to be had exclusively from official documents, or from guarded talks with diplomats. Nor is it to be gathered entirely from the people themselves. The life of a great nation is too widely scattered and complex and vast; too many opposing forces are at work, each with its own intensity of self seeking.

Has any other country besides Mexico so many types of enemy within the gates? Here they are both foreign and native, hostile to each other by tradition, but mingling their ambitions in a common cause. The Mexican capitalist joins forces with the American against his revolutionary fellow-countryman. The Catholic Church enlists the help of Protestant strangers in the subjugation of the Indian, clamouring for his land. Reactionary Mexicans work faithfully with reactionary foreigners to achieve their ends by devious means. The Spanish, a scourge of Mexico, have plans of their own and are no better loved than they ever were. The British, Americans and French seek political and financial power, oil and mines; a splendid horde of invaders, they are distrustful of each other, but unable to disentangle their interests. Then there are the native bourgeoisie, much resembling the bourgeoisie elsewhere, who are opposed to all idea of revolution. "We want peace, and more business," they chant uniformly, but how these blessings are to be obtained they do not know. "More business, and no Bolshevism!" is their cry, and they are ready to support any man or group of men who can give them what they want. The professional politicians of Mexico likewise bear a strong family likeness to gentlemen engaged in this line of business in other parts of the world. Some of them have their prejudices; it may be against the Americans, or against the Church, or against the radicals, or against the other local political party, but whatever their prejudices may be they are pathetically unanimous in their belief that big business will save the country.

The extreme radical group includes a number of idealists, somewhat tragic figures these, for their cause is so hopeless. They are nationalists of a fanatical type, recalling the early Sinn Feiners. They are furious and emotional and reasonless and determined. They want, God pity them, a free Mexico at once. Any conservative newspaper-editor will tell you what a hindrance they are to the "best minds" who are now trying to make the going easy for big business. If a reasonable Government is to get any work done, such misguided enthusiasts can not be disposed of too quickly. A few cooler revolutionists have been working towards civilized alleviations of present distresses pending the coming of the perfect State. Such harmless institutions as free schools for the workers, including a course in social science, have been set going. Clinics, dispensaries, birth-control information for the appallingly fertile Mexican woman, playgrounds for children—it sounds almost like the routine programme of any East Side social-service worker. But here in Mexico such things have become dangerous, bolshevistic. Roberto Haberman, who is responsible for many of these plans, is now in hiding, with the news-

papers clamouring wildly for his head. Among the revolutionists, the communists have been a wildly disturbing element. This cult was composed mostly of discontented foreigners, lacking even the rudiments of the Russian theory, with not a working revolutionist among them. The Mexicans, when they are not good party-revolutionists, are simple syndicalists of an extreme type. By party-revolutionists I mean the followers of some leader who is not an adherent of any particular revolutionary formula, but who is bent on putting down whatever Government happens to be in power and establishing his own, based on a purely nationalistic ideal of reform.

The present Government of Mexico is made up of certain intensely radical people, combined with a cast-iron reactionary group which was added during the early days of the administration. In the Cabinet at the extreme left wing is Calles, the most radical public official in Mexico to-day, modified by de la Huerta at his elbow. At the extreme right wing is Alberto Pani, Minister of Foreign Relations, and Capmany, Minister of Labour. The other members are political gradations of these four minds. The pull-and-haul is intense and never ceases. Such a coalition Government for Mexico is a great idea, and the theory is not unfamiliar to American minds: that all classes have the right to equal representation in the Government. But it will not work. Quite naturally, all that any group of politicians wants is their own way in everything. They will fight to the last ditch to get it; coalition be hanged!

The revolution has not yet entered into the souls of the Mexican people. There can be no doubt of that. What is going on here is not the resistless upheaval of a great mass leavened by teaching and thinking and suffering. The Russian writers made the Russian Revolution, I verily believe, through a period of seventy-five years preoccupation with the wrongs of the peasant, and the cruelties of life under the heel of the Tsar. Here in Mexico there is no conscience crying through the literature of the country. A small group of intellectuals still write about romance and the stars, and roses and the shadowy eyes of ladies, touching no sorrow of the human heart other than the pain of unrequited love.

But then, the Indians can not read. What good would a literature of revolt do them? Yet they are the very life of the country, this inert and slow-breathing mass, these lost people who move in the oblivion of sleep-walkers under their incredible burdens; these silent and reproachful figures in rags, bowed face to face with the earth; it is these who bind together all the accumulated and hostile elements of Mexican life. Leagued against the Indian are four centuries of servitude, the incoming foreigner who will take the last hectare of his land, and his own church that stands with the foreigners.

It is generally understood in Mexico that one of the conditions of recognition by the United States is that all radicals holding office in the Cabinet and in the lesser departments of government must go. That is what must be done if Mexico desires peace with the United States. This means, certainly, the dismissal of every one who is doing constructive work in lines that ought to be far removed from the field of politics, such as education and welfare work among the Indians.

Everybody here theorizes endlessly. Each individual member of the smallest sub-division of the great triumvirate, Land, Oil and the Church, has his own pet theory, fitting his prophecy to his desire. Everybody is in the confidence of somebody else who knows everything long before it happens. In this way one hears of revolutions to be started to-morrow or the next day or the day after that; but though the surface shifts and changes, one can readily deduce for oneself that one static combination remains, Land, Oil and the Church. In principle these three are one. They do not take part in these petty national dissensions. Their battle-ground is the world. If the oil-companies are to get oil, they need land. If the Church is to have wealth, it needs land. The partition of land in Mexico, therefore, menaces not only the *haciendados* (individual land-holders), but for-

eign investors and the very foundations of the Church. Already, under the land-reform laws of Juarez, the Church can not hold land; it evades this decree, however, by holding property in guardianship, but even this title will be destroyed by re-partition.

The recent encounters between Catholics and Socialists in different parts of Mexico have been followed by a spectacular activity on the part of the Catholic clergy. They are pulling their old familiar wires, and all the be-draggled puppets are dancing with a great clatter. The clever ones indulge in skilful moves in the political game, and there are street-brawls for the hot-heads. For the peons there is always the mouldy, infallible device; a Virgin—this time of Guadalupe—has been seen to move, to shine miraculously in a darkened room! A poor woman in Puebla was favoured by Almighty God with the sight of this miracle, just at the moment of the Church's greatest political uncertainty; and now this miraculous image is to be brought here to Mexico City. The priests are insisting on a severe investigation to be carried on by themselves, and the statue is to be placed in an *oratorio*, where it will be living proof to the faithful that the great patroness of Mexico has set her face against bolshevism.

The peons are further assured by the priests that to accept the land given to them by the reform-laws is to be guilty of simple stealing, and every one taking such land will be excluded from holy communion—a very effective threat. The agents who come to survey the land for the purposes of partition are attacked by the very peons they have come to benefit. Priests who warn their congregations against the new land-laws have been arrested and imprisoned, and now and then a stick of dynamite has been hurled at a bishop's palace by a radical hot-head. But these things do not touch the mighty power of the Church, solidly entrenched as it is in its growing strength, and playing the intricate game of international politics with gusto and skill.

So far, I have not talked with a single American of the bourgeois colony here who does not eagerly watch for the show to begin. They want American troops in here, and want them quickly—they are apprehensive that the soldiers will not arrive soon enough, and that they will be left to the mercy of the Mexicans for several weeks, maybe. It is strange talk one hears. It is indulged in freely over café-tables and on street-corners, at teas and at dances.

Meanwhile international finance goes on its own appointed way. The plans that were drawn up more than a year ago by certain individuals who manage these things in the United States, are going forward nicely, and are being hampered no more than normally by upstarts who have plans of their own. Inevitably certain things will have to be done when the time comes, with only a few necessary deviations due to the workings of the "imponderables." The whole programme has been carefully worked out by Oil, Land, and the Church, the powers that hold this country securely in their grip. I am, etc.,

Mexico City, Mexico. KATHERINE ANNE PORTER.

MISCELLANY.

It surprised me the other day to find in a group of friends, all of whom are professionally addicted to literature, that each one of them gazed upon a volume of Cobbett I happened to have in my pocket, with a blank failure at recognition. Not one of them knew the author of "Rural Rides" except as a vague name; not one of them saw in him a man who, since he did much of his writing in America, should be regarded, at least to the extent that Tom Paine is so regarded, as a contributor to American literature. Yet Cobbett was a keen observer, a sturdy writer, an honest critic, and along certain lines—such as the interpretation of mediæval history—an original thinker; and it is rather interesting to find that a man of so many virtues should be so thoroughly neglected less than a hundred years after his death. Especially in the United States, this neglect is a

loss to the community; for again and again Cobbett describes an eighteenth-century America that is unknown to the present generation. Should we not do honour to an author who reminds us, in his "Advice to a Young Man," that "one of the most amiable features of the character of American society is this: that men never boast of their riches and never disguise their poverty; but they talk of both as of any other matter fit for public conversation. No man shuns another because he is poor: no man is preferred to another because he is rich"? If that America is dead, let us not forget the journalist who wrote an admiring epitaph. After William Cobbett came Mr. Jefferson Brick, the editor of the *Rowdy Journal*; and after Mr. Jefferson Brick—but there is no need to single out contemporaries.

LIKE Burns, Cobbett was a sagacious peasant; and like Burns he did things that peasants are not supposed to do when Providence has placed them in that station of life. I do not mean to imply that there is any other similarity between the two men, except that they both spring from the soil and seem to draw many of their good qualities from this source. Burns is the peasant in love; Cobbett is the peasant at work: that difference puts them, if nothing else does, in two different worlds. The frugality, the foresight, and the persistence that a man acquires in working his own land, the virtues that made the English yeoman a byword, were embodied in Cobbett. It was in the days of his youth that land-enclosure became the sport of the titled gentleman-farmers who followed the lead of "Turnip" Townshend in improving agriculture; and Cobbett was, perhaps, the last Englishman whose resolute protests on behalf of the underdog express the great qualities of a sturdy peasantry. As Mr. G. K. Chesterton says, in his study of the "Victorian Age in Literature," after Cobbett, radicalism became urban and torism suburban. The editor of the *Political Register* was one of the few men who, in the growing thicket of industrialism, was able to see that the way to build Jerusalem was to recapture England's green and pleasant land. He had the peasant's wit to understand that the most profound, the most radical revolution would be, not a red, but a green one.

THE naïve eye and unflinching common sense of Cobbett are the better part of his genius. In an age where classic criticism had made "mediæval" a synonym for foulness, uncouthness, ignorance, and poverty, it was an act of sheer originality to discover, as Cobbett discovered, that mediæval institutions had become thoroughly bankrupt in England only after they had been ruined by force through the concentration of secular power in Westminster. In his conception of history, Cobbett anticipated Thorold Rogers and others. Consider, for instance, this pregnant passage: "To understand well the history of the country, you should first understand how it came to be divided into counties, hundreds, and into parishes; how judges, sheriffs, and juries first arose; to what end they were all invented, and how the changes with respect to any of them have been produced. But it is of particular consequence that you ascertain the *state of the people* in former times, which is to be ascertained by *comparing the then price of labour with the then price of food.*"

In another place Cobbett shows that in the county of Norfolk the parish churches were on an average only a mile and a half apart from each other; and then he asks whether this shows that in mediæval times the country was "thinly inhabited by miserable people," or whether it was a sign of "augmented population, ease and plenty" in the nineteenth century, that 268 parsonage houses in 731 parishes should have fallen into ruin. This endeavour to get at first-hand knowledge, to see the facts plainly for themselves, and to square up every assertion with practical experience, is never absent from Cobbett's work. That which could not be shown, Cobbett always seemed to suspect could be visibly shown up; and frequently he was right.

On the weaknesses of this energetic and indefatigable peasant one need not hesitate to dwell; for they are the obvious defects of his virtues, and it would be hard to regard them with anything other than a friendly and indulgent smile. Brought up in a period when the village games were fast disappearing from the village common, as the common itself was being gobbled up by the landed proprietors, Cobbett did not know how to play. He revelled in purposeful occupations; and his chief relief from work was more work. He was the kind of man who would travel twenty miles on foot to succour a friend in need and would chafe at the necessity for wasting five minutes in idle or unedifying conversation with him. Work was almost a vicious propensity in Cobbett; hence, a great part of human activity remained a blank to him. One fancies that he liked the study of English grammar better than the enjoyment of English literature: the first helped a man to hold his own in conversation with people of higher rank; whilst the second—of what avail was it? Then, too, Cobbett's pride in his attainments would be as offensive as Josiah Bounderby's, were it not so simple. The self-made man has always the air of a Pygmalion to his Galatea, and with the author of "Advice to a Young Man," his admiration of the creature he had carved out of a rough block of a peasant lad, an erstwhile soldier in the colonies, was almost boundless. In all, however, a doughty and lovable man. Would it not be worth while to have an American estimation of him, a new reading of his life? To assimilate Cobbett in American literature would toughen the fibre of an older Americanism which has long seemed on the point of decay, if indeed the point has not been passed.

JOURNEYMAN.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF MOBS.

SIRS: I protest, mobbing is not un-American. If you doubt me, I hope you will believe Vice-President Coolidge, who in the following paragraph taken from his article entitled "Enemies of the Republic," in the *Delineator* for July, 1921, says:

In this connexion it should be interesting to note that the *Occident*, a student publication of the University of California, in the May, 1920, issue, reports and severely criticizes the mobbing of a man who sold radical papers at the University gates.

I note that you, sirs, together with the editors of several other disloyal sheets, and divers bolshevik clergy, has severely criticized the Tulsa Americans for their mobbing of radical Negroes. But we have the Administration and the people behind us, and therefore, as an Oklahoma American, I warn you to leave off reporting and criticizing mobs, or, by the Eternal, you shall pay for it. I am, etc.,

O. H. PERCENT.

POSTER-DESIGN IN ENGLAND.

SIRS: Every now and then a friend passes on the *Freeman* for my perusal. I was particularly interested in "H. T. C.'s" letter in your issue of 8 June on "The Londoner and His Posters."

"H. T. C." talks of the advertising genius who has made the London Underground Railway stations so attractive. He goes on:

I do not know his name, but he is said to be the traffic-manager of the Combined Underground-Railway and 'bus companies. In the morning he attacks traffic-problems: in the afternoon he designs the most seductive posters. Poster-design in America . . . is still pretty much dedicated to the 'smashing contrast,' the 'punch' in flat colours. But a poster, as this clever Englishman has discovered, can do a lot more things besides hit you between the eyes. . . .

Now this quotation, and much more than I have not quoted, is all very amusing. The traffic-manager of the London Underground Railways and associated concerns is a very able person with ideas, none the less so because he can recognize ability and ideas in others, but his best friend could not accuse him of being competent to draw or design a poster. Further, it does not happen to be "a clever Englishman" whose work first enlivened our Underground stations. It happens to be a roo per cent American from California with a shock of glorious red hair; by name Edward McKnight Kauffer. During the

last couple of years or so, however, he has had an imitator, Mr. Gregory Brown, a member of the Royal Society of British Artists, who has also turned out some quite agreeable posters for the Underground Railways.

In some quarters there appears to be an attempt to credit Mr. Gregory Brown with the initiation of this type of poster, but there can in reality be no question that Mr. McKnight Kauffer was first in the field—that is to say, in England in recent years—as any person can see for himself if he compares the posters turned out in 1915 and 1916 by these two artists respectively.

Your correspondent "H. T. C." refers to the "Teutonic influences" that have given us the "punch" in flat colours. Now the punch in posters was undoubtedly first developed and exploited on a large scale by the Germans, but oddly enough it was originally based on the work of impressionist and post-impressionist French artists, modifications of which applied to posters, were first employed in this country by the Beggar-staff brothers a generation ago and then forgotten.

Contemporary French poster work has, in the main, been left far behind by the Germans, as can be seen by a comparative study of their respective great war-posters or by looking at the splendid coloured advertisements in German journals like the *Motor*. I am etc.,

London, England.

ALAN BRECK.

OUR DRAMATIC CRITICS.

SIRS: Your correspondent, Mr. Lawrence Mason, finds fault with our dramatic reviewers, with Mr. Alexander Woollcott of the *Times* in particular, for reasons which are not altogether convincing. That is to say, Mr. Mason's indictments are too vague to be taken seriously either by the thoughtful playgoer or the student of the theatre.

Now, I do not hold a brief for the reviewers, but I can not see how Mr. Woollcott's harsh criticism of Miss Eva La Gallienne's fastidious enunciation in "Liliom" marks him down as an incompetent. I do not often find myself in agreement with Mr. Woollcott; in fact, I am more apt to laugh at his cultural posturings than not. Nevertheless, in this instance I am in substantial accord with him. Miss Le Gallienne's diction was too refined, to chaste, too aspiringly beautiful, in fact, to render the impression of the uncouth speech of an Hungarian servant-girl. I have seen "Liliom" done in several languages and, what is more, I think I know the Hungarian type that Molnar sought to portray. Anyone who is familiar with this sort of girl will be rather more disposed to indulge in silent laughter than yield to a "tear-stricken condition" into which, according to Mr. Mason, the audience fell when he saw the play.

In any case, whether or not this is so, surely this is a matter of opinion about which critics and playgoers may be permitted to differ. Certainly the "tear-stricken condition" of any American audience is no valid test of acting.

One or two serious indictments may be urged against the reviewers, one of the most serious being that they betray only a touch-and-go acquaintance with the theatre, and even a more superficial knowledge of dramatic literature the world over. They appear to lack, moreover, a certain breadth and depth of human experience, of contact with ideas and an idea-breeding milieu. Yet, whatever strictures are charged against them, it must be remembered that the conditions under which they are compelled to work are not conducive to sober reflection and mellow judgments, assuming, of course, that they are capable of these. A dramatic reviewer, according to most newspaper proprietors, is only a reporter who is having a good time at shows, free of charge and on the newspaper's valuable time. That is why, when the theatrical season is over, the dramatic critic is often put on the desk or, not infrequently, sent out to cover a fire or a prize fight. I am, etc.

New York City.

PIERRE LOVING.

"THE HOUSING-FAMINE."

SIRS: I observe that the *Freeman* of 8 June contains a critique by Mr. Charles Harris Whitaker of "The Housing-Famine," a book of which I am one-third author. It may be worth noting that, since the book was published, the legislatures of New York and New Jersey have adopted somewhat haltingly the solution of the housing-problem which I advocated and which your critic deprecates, namely: the exemption of new dwellings from taxation partially and for a number of years. The Press bears witness to a substantial stimulation of house-production in spite of the doubting Thomases who control finance, and despite high labour-costs which are due to low efficiency rather than to high nominal

wages. Of course it is horribly unfair to exempt new buildings and continue taxing old ones. But when has fairness ever been a criterion of taxation? If it were made so, would a single impost now levied escape denunciation? In the course of justice, not a solitary tax now imposed should see salvation.

Mr. Whitaker is liable to mislead some readers by representing me as "clamouring for State aid," when I merely ask that the State should not do in relation to one class of property, viz., new buildings for dwelling-purposes, what I think it should not do in relation to any class of building, old or new. Are we asking the aid of a hold-up man, when we beg him not to relieve us of property which he has the power but not the moral right to take? My distrust of the State as an agency for accomplishing anything of value outside of its own rigidly limited field, is almost as complete as the *Freeman's*. Can I say more?

Your reviewer cites the Interborough System as an authority on economics, quoting its dictum that higher rents make higher taxes. I wonder if he appreciates the Interborough's local reputation for veracity or intelligence. Systems seek to produce effects on the public mind without much reference to the truth of their assertions. I am prepared to indicate a long period in the recent history of New York, during which taxes rose and rents fell. If landlords could add taxes to rents why should they rend their garments and hire soothsayers to beset legislators and boards of estimate? The fact is, of course, that taxes on land-values can not be shifted, but taxes on improvements may so discourage production of new buildings that rents will rise because of scarcity. Sometimes the stimulation given to production of buildings by heavy taxation of land is sufficient to overcome the inertia caused by high building-taxes. During the period through which we have been passing high rents were probably inevitable, but it is worth noting that proportionately rents rose less than anything else.

It is not contended that the exemption-policy is anything more than a makeshift which may help to tide us over a crucial emergency. It is, however, a move in the right direction, because it enables the people to do something to help themselves and not merely wait for "George" to do it. I am, etc.,

New York City,

JOHN J. MURPHY.

CONCERNING "JOHN FERGUSON."

SIRS: I should like to question some of Mr. Boyd's statements about "John Ferguson," in your issue of 15 June. First, as to the lukewarmness of the play's reception in London. Is it fair to judge the merit of a play by its reception? Are audiences infallible judges? I have had considerable experience of London audiences since the war, and I can assure you that such an audience is by no means a true index to the quality of a play. The outstanding characteristic of our audiences is shallowness, both intellectual and emotional. They will not think and they dare not feel. The only form of appreciation which they manifest easily is laughter. This is probably a reaction from the war-years of tragedy. Maybe the American people can still endure and enjoy (if such a word be permissible) the tragedy of "John Ferguson," which demanded of us more emotional response than we could give, which touched us on the raw too much to allow a feeling of enjoyment. This, however, is no just cause for deprecation of Mr. Ervine's play. Rather does it bear witness to its success, since it proves with what poignancy it made its appeal.

In the second place Mr. Boyd, strangely enough, advances as an argument against the play the fact that the actors were not only unsuited to it, but actually misinterpreted it, that is, placed upon it a different interpretation from that which Mr. Boyd assumes was intended by the author. Is this to condemn a dramatist? Who will turn playwright if his work is to be judged entirely by the interpretations of those who act it and the size of the audience? "The parts of Mrs. Ferguson and Hannah were clearly beyond the conception of Miss Mary Hampton and Miss Angela McCahill. . . . In her gestures and general bearing she (Miss McCahill) was as unmistakably the spoiled American young woman as she was not an Irish country girl, or any type of womanhood indigenous to Ireland," says Mr. Boyd, and later, referring to Mr. Digges: "He has created a play about James Cæsar, whereas the author wrote a play about John Ferguson, who was obviously meant to be the principal figure." A case of blatant misinterpretation and bad acting, since a subsidiary character has been so treated as to overshadow the principal figure, thereby moving the very pivot of the play. In the London

production James Cæsar appeared in his just proportion and the true balance of the play was preserved, doubtless to its advantage. The author should really be allowed to know best about such things, and it is certain he did not intend the play to be staged as a melodrama, to which, according to Mr. Boyd's description, your Garrick Theatre Company debased it.

His remarks concerning "Clutie" John I can not answer since I do not presume to be his match in malice. Shavianism!—what strange bees one can get in one's bonnet! In fact, as I read the last three paragraphs of his article, I feel it is really a waste of time to attempt to confute with reasonable arguments a statement wherein reason and true criticism have so obviously been sicklied o'er by the pale cast of prejudice and the desire to buttress the reputation of a critic by means of reiteration. I am, etc.,

VERNON H. PORTER

London, England.

BOOKS.

LORD BRYCE'S INQUEST.

POLITICAL physiology rather than anatomy is Lord Bryce's subject in his two new volumes on "Modern Democracies."¹ He is concerned, that is to say, with the manner in which governments actually work rather than with their formal structure. He has sought "to provide a solid basis for argument and judgment" on schemes of political reform "by examining a certain number of popular governments in their actual working, comparing them with one another, and setting forth the various merits and defects" which belong to each. The task is an ambitious and difficult one. Materials for such a study are increasing very rapidly; democratic experiments in States that were formerly under the Russian and Austro-Hungarian monarchies and in such countries as India, China, and Egypt are putting theories to new tests, and generalizations, therefore, must always be provisional; each writer "hands on the torch to his successor and the succession is infinite." Lord Bryce's opportunities for travel and observation of different governmental systems at work, his experience in English public life, his extensive acquaintance with politicians in the countries considered, and his background of historical and legal knowledge enable him to take the torch from Montesquieu and worthily bear it. He may hold it for some time.

The first part of Lord Bryce's treatise deals with considerations which are applicable to democratic government in general. He discusses such questions as the theoretical foundations of democracy; the ideals of liberty and equality; education, religion, the press, political parties, local self-government, and public opinion. In many respects this is the best part of the work. This theoretical background is followed by a description of democracies at work. Athens, the Republics of Spanish America, France, Switzerland, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are passed in review. To those who are ignorant of the frameworks which the Constitutions of these countries have sought to provide, the discussion will frequently be puzzling; but to those who are even partly informed, Lord Bryce's chapters will seem models of concise exposition. The third division of the work examines and criticizes democratic institutions in the light of the six systems which have been described. The decline of legislatures, the executive and judicial powers, second chambers, democracies and foreign policy, direct legislation, and home rule are some of the subjects on which Lord Bryce generalizes. He then observes certain phenomena which bear on the working of democracy everywhere—the money power in politics, the backward

¹ "Modern Democracies." James, Viscount Bryce. 2 vols. New York: The Macmillan Company.

ances, letters and arts—and concludes with some reflections on the present and future of democracy. These relate to the results (almost entirely political, however) of democracy, the problem of non-oligarchical leadership, present tendencies, radical movements, and the future.

A work of such vast scope makes the reviewer feel that there is much truth in Sir Henry Wotton's dictum, "Critics are only brushers of noblemen's clothes"; and in this case the wardrobe is so extensive that there is opportunity to examine only a few of the garments for possible particles of dust. Lord Bryce would doubtless be the first to admit that his generalizations are valuable, to the extent that they cause the reader to work out his own political creed, and it may be worth while, therefore, to suggest certain questions which a reading of Lord Bryce's treatise raises.

In the first place, one may ask whether the chief problem of modern democracies is not what they do, rather than how they work. Lord Bryce, to be sure, defines "the ultimate test of excellence" as "what democracy has accomplished or failed to accomplish with other kinds of government for the well-being of each people," but elsewhere he says—and this belief dominates the book—that democracy "really means nothing more nor less than the rule of the whole people expressing their sovereign will by their votes." Or, again, "Democracy—which is merely a form of government, not a consideration of the purposes to which government may be turned—has nothing to do with economic equality, which might exist under any form of government, and might possibly work more smoothly under some other form." A similar attitude is taken by Lord Bryce with respect to the economic forces which control political action; but, when its economic aspects are barred, democracy is extremely diluted. It would be a service of great value if a statesman and political seer with Lord Bryce's experience and knowledge, were to discuss what democracies have actually done for their citizens and what are the possible developments of public-service functions of the State. One feels that it is regrettable that Lord Bryce discusses *how* governmental machinery works and does not seem to be greatly interested in the question of *who* works it. Such an inquiry would necessitate, even for very tentative conclusions, an exhaustive analysis of economic forces, the character of representative bodies, and particular incidents like the British election of 1918, the American presidential election of 1920, or, more specifically, the influences back of tariff and railway-legislation, and such matters as the Colombian treaty. Even in his chapter on the money power in politics, Lord Bryce does not touch on these realities.

Secondly, what Lord Bryce says about *how* the machinery works is very broad in its application—so broad, indeed, that it seems at times to be contrary to the inductive method which he professes to use. In several instances—two of which I select—the reader will look in vain for any consideration of what are at least tolerably important problems concerned with the adjustment of governmental machinery.

In England, France, and the United States, for example, there is marked dissatisfaction with the existing relationship between the executive and the legislature. Is the weakness of the French executive due to its responsibility without the complementary power of dissolving the Chamber? How far does the French system of parliamentary Commissions, not only to prepare legislation but to exert a day-by-day check on the executive, contribute to the very opposite of the legislative

impotence which is so marked in the governmental machinery of England and the United States?

An even more important problem is that of democratic control of foreign policy, and to this question Lord Bryce devotes a whole chapter. But his particular inquiry is whether democracies have been pacifically inclined and whether their policies have been as successful as those of autocracies. The efficiency of democracy can hardly be appealed to in order to justify it, and the more important point would seem to be whether there actually is democratic control. The answer to such a question must clearly be in the negative; from one point of view, the coming into being of British labour's Council of Action was evidence of a gap in the British Constitution. In the United States, the senatorial ratification of treaties is an empty safeguard; and with regard to vital matters—relations with Europe, Japan, Mexico, Latin America—there is no more democratic control of the "best minds" than there was of Mr. Wilson himself. The French use one of their Commissions, with some effectiveness, and the English Commons has long debated the question of a Foreign Affairs Committee and the provision of more opportunities for parliamentary discussion of foreign policy, but in the United States the question has remained almost unnoticed. The constitutional division of the power has occupied the stage, and the American people have apparently had little objection to a thoroughly autocratic control of foreign affairs.

How far, and in what manner, on the basis of the facts that Lord Bryce examines, should the executive control the legislature and the legislature the executive? Can democratic control of foreign policy be secured by interpellations, by a supervising legislative committee, or by the parliamentary form of government, and are there really any matters of which the people ought to be kept in ignorance? When it comes to questions like these—and they are surely not unimportant—Lord Bryce's generalizations glitter but do not enlighten, and they have a decided *ante-bellum* flavour which comes from the mild liberalism of the last century. This sense of remoteness from present-day affairs is probably intensified by two self-denying ordinances which the author imposes on himself: he has "reluctantly" left the study of the English government for some one who could "be credited with impartiality," for he feels himself to be disqualified by service in legislatures and cabinets, and "it is not current politics but democracy as a form of government that I seek to describe." Lord Bryce's treatise, one feels, would be of greater value if he had taken just the opposite view. Who, pray, in writing on politics has ever attained impartiality? It is knowledge and experience and insight and candour that we want, and it is a pity that Lord Bryce refuses to discuss the form of democracy which he knows best. In the second place, the avoidance of current politics has given his book an air of remoteness, apart from the fact that he rarely mentions personalities, and even then is inclined to be allusive rather than specific. We have, in Lord Bryce's view, governments of laws and not of men.

It may be true, as Mr. Philip Guedalla has remarked, that "no valet is a hero to his master. Dukes hold no mysteries for duchesses, and baronets seem scarcely wicked to their wives." But to his publisher, every author is a new Shakespeare, a Fielding, a Macaulay, or an Aristotle, as the case may be. Lord Bryce's publishers could do him no greater honour than to compare his new volumes with his own work on the American Commonwealth: "as great," they said, "in the international field as 'The American Commonwealth' was in the

national field." The claim is, I think, ill-founded. It was, in many ways, a greater achievement really to analyse the workings of a single government, to trace out the vulgar forces which are more important than principles in determining the nature of political institutions. But, like "The American Commonwealth," Lord Bryce's new book is written clearly and soberly, with no heat and very rarely with colour. Perhaps men, in order to be wise, must avoid being brilliant. One must not expect everything.

LINDSAY ROGERS.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

Few people in America or in England, understand the meaning of the three magic letters G. Q. G. To British troops, and perhaps also to others, the equivalent letters signifying the general headquarters of their forces were cause for sneers and oaths—the Brainless Brasshat, the Spit and Polish Brigade, the "cushy" job. Justifiably or not, that was the attitude of the rank and file. To France, however, they stand to-day for freedom, victory, triumph, as they stood in war for faith, hope and power—the Grand Quartier Général—to the soldier something mysterious, awful, superhuman. "It was too distant, too high, it merged in the clouds like God the Father," writes the French journalist who was responsible for drawing up the daily *communiqué*. There is a striking significance in his comparison: *Dieu le Père*, aloof, unseen, overwhelming the imagination, revealing no grief to mortal eye when the son whom he sent out is tortured and crucified.

Throughout M. de Pierrefeu's remarkable dissipation of those high, far clouds which veiled G. Q. G.,¹ there is the inevitable tragic aloofness towards the torture and death which decimated the men in the ranks, an aloofness that, in its attitude towards the holocaust of Verdun, for example, is unbecoming even to the gods. "Exasperated by the decree which obliged the officers of the staff to undergo a course with the fighting units . . . the G. Q. G. eagerly awaited the beginning of the battle. 'Let them attack, these beastly Boches! At least it will stop the naggings of the council and the Ministry!'" ; and while these irritated staff-officers discussed warmly at the dinner-table in their Olympian fastness whether Verdun is not, after all, merely a topographical point, about which it is not a question of harbouring sentiment (*avoir le sentiment du terrain*), the point was settled by three hundred thousand very gallant gentlemen upon whose dead lips had been the immortal words, "They shall not pass!"

This is how M. de Pierrefeu describes General Joffre, Generalissimo, *Dieu le Père*, during the bloody drama of Verdun:

In bed regularly at ten o'clock, except on rare occasions, he enjoyed a peaceful sleep until morning. Two or three times one had to come during the night to submit urgent orders for his approval. This is what took place. After several calls the General waked up and, through the door, asked what was the matter. Then he got out of bed, put on his slippers and opened the door, which he always locked. He immediately got back to bed and read the papers between the sheets. The orders being settled, he relocked the door. On one occasion Major Thouzelier found ten minutes after having left the room of the Commander-in-Chief, that he had forgotten a map which had to go with the orders to the army. He returned, hoping that the General would not have gone back to bed, but during the interval Joffre had already fallen into a profound slumber.

This power of sleep was legendary in Paris. Every night during the Verdun campaign M. Etienne, the former minister, used to telephone from Paris to inquire the details of the day. "Well, how are things going?" asked the Minister, "what does the General say?" "The General," invariably replied the orderly officer, "is sleeping." "Good! Good!" replied M. Etienne, completely reassured. "If things were going badly he wouldn't be sleeping."

About a month before the armistice, having been declared unfit for further service in the firing-line as a result of gas, I was sent as liaison-officer to G. Q. G. and was attached to the Section of Information which dealt with the press, the war-correspondents and propaganda. Here it was, in the profound peace of the little town of Provins, that I watched the excited officers of the G. Q. G. gather round the map, morning and evening, and mark off in black chalk the ever-increasing advances of the armies on their march to victory. In mess, *la popotte*, the birth of hope lit up their faces, set free their tongues, as every day brought us nearer and nearer to the end. I found that like myself most of these officers had been in the line; some had been so desperately wounded that peace for them meant only a continuance of convalescence. Others, it seemed to me, had either never been in action, or had totally forgotten that the path to victory lay over the bodies of eight million dead. They could not see beyond the chalk-marks on the map. But one and all they worked unsparingly, fiercely, devotedly. It was no time to grasp the niceties of bureaucracy, the internal politics which M. de Pierrefeu has satirized so ably in this book of his—de Pierrefeu, whose witty ebullience in the purest argot kept everybody, from generals down to second lieutenants, in peals of laughter, de Pierrefeu, who, licensed jester though he was, missed nothing of those mysterious undercurrents which swept Joffre into the vortex and dragged Nivelles into the limbo of forgotten things.

M. de Pierrefeu, a journalist by profession, was for three years responsible for the make-up of the official *communiqué*, in other words, the bowdlerization of the truth in order to sustain the fluctuating *morale* of the public. He was happily situated to detect the inner intrigues that scarcely made a ripple on the surface. His job kept him in personal touch with Joffre, Nivelles and Pétain, and their respective major-generals of staff. A word here, a silence there, a careful change of attitude toward the next comer, more than this was not necessary to put a Parisian journalist on the *qui vive*. Like a shrewd little mouse in the lion's den, his daily intimacy with these great ones enabled him to follow up the leads, to note with a discreet chuckle that held, nevertheless, a note of pain, how they were forced to finesse in the game of pull-devil, pull-baker, that was played without ceasing between Paris and G. Q. G. Something of the old enmity between the military and political rings emerged, even in the shadow of destruction that came so near to blotting out France. The party ax was still being ground, though the youth of France was giving its life-blood, and in G. Q. G. itself were theorists who gladly stepped to promotion and high honours over their unburied dead.

The finesse of the great generals, however, is no more subtle than that of M. de Pierrefeu himself. Beneath the camouflage of his cap and bells he sketches them delightfully, delicately, like a silver-point artist; and if, at one moment, he raps the Chamber over the knuckles for its obstructionism, the next moment he delivers a thrust at G. Q. G. for its assumption of divinity. He is a Boswell with discrimination and the gift of satire. Untainted by the prestige of his position M. de Pierrefeu shows himself above everything a patriot in the real meaning of that much-abused word, and not only his work during the war, but his book, seeking only the truth, has been, and is, of real value to France. His loyalty to the Grand Quartier rings very true. Like a true modern child he can spank his father for misdemeanours and go on loving him. Thus his genuine admiration of the manner in which the Grand Quartier Général successfully accomplished its gigantic task is generously expressed.

For the special benefit and information of those whose unfortunate lack of familiarity with the French language will not permit them to grasp the finer points of this remarkable book, it is very much to be hoped that a translation is on its way.

A. HAMILTON GIBBS.

¹"G. Q. G. Secteur 1." Jean de Pierrefeu. Paris: L'Édition Française Illustrée.

BORN OUT OF DUE TIME

SINCE we know that the present generation of English poets either can not, will not, or dare not exercise towards themselves the undeviating, relentless cruelty which is the sole discipline of the great poet, perhaps we might as well adopt at the outset a lower critical standard altogether, and say that this one writes well and that one badly. For, after all, what lower insult can be made about an author than to say he writes well? The true artist in words never writes merely well; he writes either magnificently or appallingly: magnificently when he forces you despite your will to be himself; appallingly whenever he fails. The sole function of great style is to play upon the reader's sensibilities and feelings and subconscious instincts as on a violin. The word "style" in any other connexion has no meaning; nor can style be taught or transmitted in any way save by constant practice at writing and constant reading of works that are universally admitted to be of merit. To "write well" is always the ideal of an eclectic, academic, and second-rate age.

Mr. Blunden¹ is one of the younger English poets, and he writes well. Too well, in fact. Better than Mr. Drinkwater probably, or Mr. Shanks, or Mr. Squire, or Mr. Freeman. But his attitude towards his subject-matter is the attitude of the minor poet. He is too timid to inform his subject-matter, which is nature, with imagination. So he halts half-way and develops his fancy concerning it. He is too sensitive to commit those breaches against "good form" by which every first-rate poet hammers home his meaning. So he slips into a weary facility which is saddening. He is too self-conscious to be himself. So he transfers his own emotions before a smithy to a phantasmal "Clare."

Here, in an extreme but characteristic example, is an epitome of the malady of this age, which afflicts others besides poets, other lands besides England, and which will inevitably dominate the world for the next twenty years, if not for the next two hundred. We are at bottom all afraid of the imagination, too ardently enamoured of our material civilization frankly to destroy it, too conscious of our own importance in the scheme of things to recognize the hard but mystical fact that suffering, hunger, and death may be of more importance. We vainly fancy ourselves the pinnacle of all the ages, whereas five minutes' study of any of the better-lasting and more desirable civilizations of the past, such as the Chinese or Egyptian, would convince us that any civilization which makes material progress its sole end could not possibly endure. The result is that when a man is born among us of considerable poetic perception, he, too, must either float with the current of a too easy acceptance of our popular faith, or sink. Mr. Blunden lacks neither poetic material nor the will to use it. He has the misfortune, which perhaps is also our misfortune, of being born too late.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

SAITH THE PREACHER.

ENGLAND is seemingly a country of infinite spiritual resources. At those periods in her history when it has seemed as if her spirit were exhausted, some Englishman has suddenly appeared and set her on the high road again marching forward with braver heart and stronger hopes—some great preacher or poet has experienced a new vision, and the tale of it has stirred an Alfred or a Warwick, a Lanfranc or a Raleigh, a Pitt or a Nelson.

By what magic does this happen? By no magic whatsoever. It happens because the English people have ever been ready to listen to a high spiritual message when it has been brought to them, not from a stranger country, but out of the stuff of their own hopes. There is another reason, and it is that in their many enterprises, the English people have never been altogether materialistic. Consciously or unconsciously, they have never utterly separ-

ated themselves from their Christian ideal. They owe that saving grace to their preachers and poets, in the past, and they owe it to them now in the present crisis of their national life.

There is at least one such preacher to-day in England who is gifted rarely with the wisdom and knowledge that is so much needed in these momentous times. I refer to Dr. William Ralph Inge,² Dean of Saint Paul's, London. In Dr. Inge's opinion we are witnessing, in this present imbroglia of the world's affairs, the beginning of the decay of our social order. Civilization lies prostrate. In the midst of great outward prosperity, the symptoms of disintegration have never been so menacing. Unrestricted competition must inevitably end in the future, as in the past, in civil and international war.

Human nature has not been changed by civilization. . . . Beneath the dingy uniformity of international fashion in dress, man remains what he has always been—a splendid fighting animal, a self-sacrificing hero, and a blood-thirsty savage. Apart from the accumulation of knowledge and experience, which are external and precarious acquisitions, there is no proof that we have changed much since the first Stone Age. . . . The purity and idealism of human nature, no longer centred, as formerly, in religion, has gathered round a romantic patriotism, for which the belligerents are willing to sacrifice their all, without counting the cost. Like all other idealisms, patriotism varies from a noble devotion to a moral lunacy.

Democracy, in the view of Dr. Inge, has been discredited and abandoned in action: socialism is a delusion; as it exists, it is individualism run mad; it is the very antithesis to the consciousness of organic unity in a nation, which is the spiritual basis of socialism. The modern town-life has brought about the disease of social unrest. The town-dweller of to-day has neither God nor Devil; he lives without awe, without admiration, without fear. To the town man any radical change must be for the better.

We are witnessing the decline and fall of the social order which began with the industrial revolution a hundred and sixty years ago. The cancer of industrialism has begun to mortify, and the end is in sight. . . . Humanitarian legislation, so far from arresting this movement, is more likely to accelerate it, and the same may be said of the insatiable greed of our new masters. It is indeed instructive to observe how cupidity and sentiment, which (with pugnacity) are the only passions which the practical politician needs to consider, usually defeat their own ends. He may benefit for a time a minority of his own class, but only by sealing the doom of the rest. . . . Capitalism itself has degenerated; the typical millionaire is no longer the captain of industry, but the international banker and company-promoter. . . . It is not to be expected that the working class should be less greedy and unscrupulous than the educated; indeed, it is plain, that now that it realizes its power, it will be even more so.

In this world of competition, Dr. Inge warns us, the competitors must either destroy each other, or the victor become parasitic on the vanquished, and at last disappear.

Where lies the remedy? It lies, says Dr. Inge, in a realization of the real values of life. The world's standards of value are quantitative, the real values are qualitative. Qualitative values are unlimited in amount; they are increased by being shared, not lessened; and we rob nobody by taking them. The final integration is a spiritual one, for spiritual movements are non-competitive. On this plane only is there real community of interests. "Some values are not relative but absolute. . . . Our ultimate aim is to live in the knowledge and enjoyment of the absolute values, Truth, Goodness and Beauty."

We can realize these values in our own lives only by means of the Spirit, says Dr. Inge, and the way to attain that realization is shown to us by the Christian revelation:

The essence of the Christian revelation is the proclamation of a standard of absolute values, which contradicts at every point the estimates of good and evil current in the world. . . . When applied to human life, Christianity introduces, as it were, a currency, which demonetizes the old; or gives us a new scale of prices, in which the cheapest things are the dearest, and the dearest the cheapest.

"The Spirit creates values, while the demagogue shrieks

¹"The Wagoner, and other poems." Edmund Blunden. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

²"The Philosophy of Plotinus." 2 vols. "Personal Idealism and Mysticism." "Outspoken Essays." W. R. Inge. New York: Longmans, Green and Co. "The Idea of Progress." *Ibid.* New York: Oxford University Press.

to transfer the dead symbols of them." The economic man is bankrupt. He has failed because his assets were worthless. He has traded with dead symbols. In his worship of material goods, he has sacrificed to a lifeless golden image. He must begin over again, and this time he must call in the help of science to demonstrate the truth of his vision, so that his revelation shall not be mistaken for imagination, but shall be realized in accomplishment.

The spiritual integration of society which we desire and behold afar off, must be illuminated by the light of science, and warmed by the rays of idealism, a white light, but not cold. And idealism must be compacted as a religion, for it is the function of religion to prevent the fruits of the flowering-times of the Spirit from being lost. . . . The nation that first finds a practical reconciliation between science and idealism is likely to take the front place of the peoples of the world.

This is the position Dr. Inge takes up. Its philosophic foundation he laid in his profound and masterly Gifford Lectures on "The Philosophy of Plotinus," in his Paddock Lectures on "Personal Idealism and Mysticism," and in his Romanes Lecture on "The Idea of Progress." The ground had been partly cleared by him in his famous Bampton Lectures on "Christian Mysticism" delivered in 1899. Dr. Inge has just published another volume entitled "Outspoken Essays," which deals, among other subjects, with "Our Present Discontents," "Patriotism," "The Future of the English Race" and "The Indictment Against Christianity." These four essays will profoundly move any reader who has not sold his spiritual birthright for the mess of pottage offered him by the business world, for their appeal is made in language compact of clear thought, fine emotion, and prophetic vision.

In all his writings, Dr. Inge is concerned with solving the real problem of existence, which is, how to translate Truth into terms of purposive activity, so that the result shall take the forms of Goodness and Beauty. For these three—Truth, Goodness and Beauty—are not ideal values, imaginings of the human mind, which have no existence. They are absolute principles, the source and goal of the whole cosmic process. The reception of Truth may begin as an act of faith, but the experiment will end in a true experience. Dr. Inge's whole ministerial life has been given up to demonstrating that this act of faith must end in this experience, and that this experience is happiness. There are three avenues, Dr. Inge points out, to the knowledge of truth—purposive action, reasoning thought, and loving affection. The will and the intellect must work in harmony to realize the desires of the Spirit, which are, to do the right for the sake of doing it, to know the truth for the sake of knowing it, and to love Beauty for the sake of loving it. This Way of Perfection is the only progress which is real.

The ascent of the soul to God, which is made by thousands, in the short span of a single life, may be an earnest of what humanity shall one day achieve. . . . The future is hidden from us, but through the darkness the light of Heaven burns steadily before us; and we know that yonder, amid the eternal ideas of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, is our birthplace and our final home.

TEMPLE SCOTT.

SHORTER NOTICES.

It is perhaps a pity that Mr. Glazer decided, apparently, to present his translation of "Liliom" in its original form, rather than in the version that was used in the production by the Theatre Guild: the result is that Liliom is not the barker for a merry-go-round but for a "carousel," "The Sparrow" is re-Austrianized, becoming merely Ficsur, and the song about the "damn police" loses its excellent major quality. There are a number of similar instances, and in every case the stage version is the more effective, at least for Americans. Such minor imperfections, however, are easily transcended by the force and charm of the play. In these days, surely, when the liberty of the individual is being curtailed in so many directions, while machine-made standards of success are constantly more prevalent, such a clear and dramatic glimpse into the unregenerate heart of man ought to be a subject for universal thanksgiving.

J. S. N.

¹ "Liliom." Franz Molnar. Translated by Benjamin Glazer. New York: Boni and Liveright.

THE vaguely mediaeval princess in Mr. Norman Douglas's "They Went,"¹ this princess who found her city granite and left it gold, is like Zuleika Dobson in being marvellously beautiful and very much alive. Also, she inspires a fatal passion in all eligible males. With her, however, nothing is left to chance. The Great Drain, which the Roman Ormidius Limpidus constructs beneath her tower, supplies a most convenient exit for all those who threaten to control the heart or head of Aithryn's red-haired daughter; it was through this exit "they went." Kenwyn, the righteous, brave, and not impossible missionary, almost persuades her to revise her code, but the quite-too-chaste-and-venerable Mother Manthis correctly reads his Awenn. He is not artistic, while Theophilus has all the arts at his finger-ends. "A portico is worth a preacher," as that seasoned antagonist of the All-Highest points out at the critical moment; and Kenwyn goes. On the other hand, when Aithryn opens the sluice-gate and lets his white horses in, the All-Highest shows that it's a poor epigram that will not work both ways, and has his little laugh as usual: he has a reputation to keep up, like every other character in the tale. The difficulty is that this is equally true of the author. "They Went" does not equal the first fine careless rapture of "South Wind," perhaps because Mr. Douglas is a little too much in earnest in his foolery. Evidently he shares the opinion of Theophilus that all good folk are banded together for the destruction of beauty, and, with Swinburne, deplores the blighting effect of the Galilean's breath on a world that should be as full of colour as a Bakst setting. It is easy to understand this view: one only wishes that the author were content to let his characters adorn a tale without insisting on their pointing a moral, especially when he attempts to sugar the propaganda with certain trite witticisms that are wholly foreign to his usual subtle humour. Fortunately such blemishes are rare: most of the time Mr. Douglas sticks to the diverting caricature he does so well. Manthis, who conducts a school for girls and, in the interests of a greater conservation of energy, urges them to exploit the unharnessed male, is a most satisfactory creation.

J. S. N.

MR. SUMMERS has written a book² which is the equivalent of a humane Baedeker to the Latin literature of the first century A. D. English critics of classical literature have too often displayed the virtuosity of the critic in the description of style, while omitting to give an adequate idea of the subject upon which the style was expended. Here, on the other hand, we have a competent summary of all the important writings of the period, neatly classified according to the various genres. Significantly enough, the first genre dealt with is the declamation; it might be said that with rare exceptions the whole Silver Age is the voice of a man reciting in some hired reception-room and to invited guests a composition which would otherwise have perished unheard. The sacrifice of value for point is universal; it infected not only the orator, but the epic poet, the historian, and the philosopher. Mr. Summers shows how Horace's contempt for the "uninitiate throng" had encouraged "that conception of literature which holds a work good or bad according as it conforms to certain rules, and assumes that he who knows those rules may safely write." Under the influence of that conception, imitation became not a rule of poetic procedure but a frenzy. Lucan, Valerius, Statius, and Silius treated Virgil not as their master but as their model; they not only borrowed stock episodes such as storms and funerals, but sought to make every turn of plot and utterance contain some reminiscence of the "Æneid." The provocation offered by these æsthetic theories is great. It would be easy to demonstrate that nothing of any value could have been produced by the men who acted upon them. But, as Anatole France has said, "*On peut dire que tout se démontre, hors ce que nous sentons véritable!*"; and Mr. Summers does well to insist on the vigour and independence which enabled these men to leave behind them writings that were "full of human interest, practical wisdom, suggestiveness, and inspiration for posterity." Mr. Summers's critical method consists in saying the worst first. He peels off the outer layers, and then exhibits with pride and affection the pearl that lies beneath. Thus he rescues Valerius Flaccus from unmerited neglect; he writes a charming essay on the gentler side of Martial; and he insists upon the genuine eloquence achieved by Seneca in his less rhetorical moments. For students of modern literature, there are many useful suggestions in the brief paragraphs which deal with the influence of Silver writers down to our own time.

R. K. H.

¹ "They Went." Norman Douglas. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

² "The Silver Age of Latin Literature." Walter Coventry Summers. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co.

EX LIBRIS.

If Mr. Hyndman were a writer of editorials for the *New York Times* or a college professor of economics (and he is eminently qualified to be either), it would not be worth while to quarrel with him; but for a generation he has been a leading spokesman for the Social Democrats of England, and his words have the authority of age, experience and position, every authority indeed except that of wisdom. It is, therefore, the critic's duty to expose Mr. Hyndman's fallacies, in order to get underneath the follies of the individual to the social and historical errors in which he is rooted and on which he stands like a blighted tree. In spite of its somewhat pompous spread of learning and appearance of stout English oak, Mr. Hyndman's book,¹ from the title to the last paragraph, is a shell full of decay and corruption. For his title, Mr. Hyndman thanks a friend, which is like thanking the man at the next desk for lending you a rubber-stamp. "The Evolution of Revolution"! How many times in trying to explain to a complacent liberal the A B C of what revolution means, I have been effectively, desperately silenced, by that horrible pun! In the last half of the last century the word "evolution" became a king's crown and a scholar's gown to any rickety idea that could don it or sneak under it. The only other word that equalled it in specious dignity was "scientific," and Mr. Hyndman, by the way, dedicates his book to "My Comrades of the Old Social-Democratic Federation: the Pioneers of Scientific Socialism in Great Britain."

MR. HYNDMAN'S book is devoted to the development of three propositions: (1) that throughout history there have been many several kinds of slavery and many revolts against it, mostly unsuccessful; (2) that the Social-Democratic Federation of England laid down the right rules for revolution with grateful regard for what other times and other nations had taught the English Social Democrats; (3) that the Russian Revolution, not that of the wise Kerensky, but the present one of the wicked Lenin, did not happen according to the rules laid down by the Social-Democratic Federation of Great Britain and therefore can not be what it is, because it ought not to be what it is according to the Marquis-of-Hyndman rules. Of these three propositions the first is more or less certain and the other two are—nonsense. Even the first proposition is not worked out with precision, insight, general accuracy. But, after all, accuracy in detail does not matter so much, since details are always in dispute or lost so that the most patient historian can not get at them. Mr. Hyndman's erratum-note is pathetic. He "wishes to correct the statement in which he reports Cicero as having strangled Cataline. It was Cataline's associates and friends who were strangled. Cataline died in battle." The great erratum of Mr. Hyndman, however, is squinting at history, deliberately preparing all the ages of man so that they shall lead up to the grand climax, which includes a Hyndman solo on an improved Marx mechanistic pianola with a *vox Britannica* modulating device—the climax of the appearance of the Social-Democratic Federation, followed by the anticlimax of getting the reliable London bobbies to clear the hall of the outrageous Russians who broke in and spoiled the party.

THE historian must, of course, have a little ism or two in his system, because he is only an individual, a poor distorted momentary wave in the great river of "evolution." It is right and "inevitable", therefore, that Mr. Hyndman should be a prejudiced historian, for all historians are prejudiced. When the historian is a man of dramatic imagination, we have a Carlyle. When the historian is a man of "scientific" candour, inviting experts of all kinds to help him clear the way through the tangle, willing to stub his toe a hundred times, laugh and go on, we have a Wells. There is no objection at all to Mr.

Hyndman's giving an individual or a partisan interpretation to history. That must be, since it is a mere man who writes. But there is a valid objection to unwarranted conjecture posing as the last word of scientific history; for Mr. Hyndman, brow on hand, does strike such a pose in spite of his modest acknowledgment of his shortcomings and his hope that younger men may make a more complete study—I hope they will! There is, moreover, a serious objection to Mr. Hyndman or any other historian trying to divert the whole Niagara of history into his private sluices to turn his private wheels (even though the machines be owned by a co-operative society). Some of the water can be deflected that way, but much of it goes plunging down its natural, unmechanized channels. At least it does not all belong to the joint-stock, British, co-operative, Social-Democratic Federation of Messrs. Hyndman & Co., Ltd.

THE first part of Mr. Hyndman's book deals with primitive man (a subject which is largely a matter of speculative anthropology), the construction of a complete human skeleton from the bones of the tail of a monkey and part of the jaw-bone of an ass—both, judging from the later results, probably true in a genealogical sense. Mr. Hyndman, however, is not satisfied with what the groping and honest anthropologists have reconstructed from the remote graveyard in which they found a piece of bone (animal unknown) and a piece of petrified wood either from the coffin or the tree over the grave. Mr. Hyndman furnishes the defunct tribesman with an idea.

He (the tribesman) would have declared [says Mr. Hyndman] if such a possibility of the realization of the unknown and the inconceivable could have been brought home to his mind, that a society of that kind [private property in land, etc.] would have been anarchical, immoral and disgusting to such a degree that life would not be worth living for the great majority of those who composed it—in which hypothetical judgment the gentle discrimination would not have been so very far wrong.

Which is to say, that if the tribesman could conceivably have thought that way, that is the way he would have thought. This tribesman must have been a busy fellow; for when he was not hunting, fishing, begetting, and fighting, he was laying the corner stone of the British Social-Democratic Federation and carving a tombstone for Nicolai Lenin.

THE people of the next stage, according to our historian, were still more foresighted. When private property began and cities came into being, one of the first troubles was with the police. "Policemen were even less popular than they are now." That is understandable, whatever the evidence may be, for it is human. But these people, Mr. Hyndman assures us, were superhuman. They knew history backwards and forwards. "The conservatives of the time [the time as defined by Mr. Hyndman is when "civilization had manifestly begun"] clung to the watchwords of the French Revolution." When we come into the fullness of Greek civilization, we find that the best minds had lost this prophetic sense of history which was possessed by their ancestors of the dawn. For, as Mr. Hyndman says, "the ablest Greek thinkers, Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus, Socrates, Plato, could not even imagine a state of society where the chattel-slavery to which they were accustomed would not continue as the foundation of their civilization, and the economic basis of industry, art, science and culture generally." This is probably true. At any rate, the truth of it can be tested by documents, for the Greek thinkers left a record of what they thought and were able to imagine.

MR. HYNDMAN'S chronology is the more puzzling because one of the principles he insists on is that no social movement can cheat the clock. The reason that the slave-revolts in Rome failed, was not so much that the slaves were beaten as that the inexorable old clock, which is not only the recording instrument of evolution, but its master in control of the whole works, put up its hands and ticked: "Nay, Spartacus, nay!" I know that clocks were not invented until some time later in Germany, but

¹ "The Evolution of Revolution." H. M. Hyndman. New York: Boni and Liveright.

a little anachronism is quite appropriate in a discussion of Mr. Hyndman's book. The reader who has not the book to refer to, will perhaps accuse me of inexcusable travesty. I will quote accurately and not deceive the most literal-minded. On page ninety-four Mr. Hyndman says: "If ever in Roman history there was a time when the slave-class, thoroughly organized, *could* possibly have succeeded in putting forward the hour of the day which the sun recorded on the dial of human progress, this was the time for such an attempt on their part." But the slaves were beaten. That is an incontestable fact. But even if they had "won final success," "the social evolution would have gone on as before." A "would-have-been" is the most irritating kind of slippery thinking in an historian, because it can not be proved or disproved. As Mr. Kipling's German scientist said (I quote from memory): "If I should have been to die from drinking beer, I would be dead."

WELL, all through the rest of history the world rolled on, doing only what it was "socially ready" to do, or a little less than that, for though it never got a minute ahead of the time clock it sometimes got five or ten minutes behind. But that was no great matter. Old Inevitability, Father Chronos at the roll-top desk, with the Fates for stenographers, was always on the job. Even up to the time of the French Revolution, a Louis or two and a few Dantons and Robespierres do not count for much, except as the clock, like the click of the knitting-needles in another and more amusing piece of English fiction, ticks them off. Mr. Hyndman says of the French Revolution: "Economic and social causes work slowly forward to their inevitable end, regardless of the persons engaged in consciously or unconsciously aiding or obstructing their development. . . . This teaching of history becomes monotonous in its iteration." But the pendulum goes on oscillating, through 'forty-eight and 'seventy-one with their rigid calendar-mathematics, through the British Chartist movement and the subsequent "period of apathy," until finally we, the Social Democrats, arrive. We, also, are inevitable—slaves of the clock. We are the true children of relentless and fulfilling time. But what is the matter with the clock? Other fellows are here, too, confound them! Now, in 1880. . . . That is where the clock should have stopped and then it would have lived up to its historical reputation for regularity. Who spoiled that wonderful clock? The Independent-Labour party stuck a finger into it and so "has done much to retard the spread of socialism." Not Marx, to whom we all bow, but Engels, his "evil genius" (*sic*), and the fools who will not understand what Marx really means, have shifted the dial until we do not know whether it is three-quarters past one century or one-quarter past the next. But the arch-destroyer of time is that demoniac relativist Lenin—Lenin and his accomplice, Germany, and the syndicalists, the anarchists, the direct-actionists, the whole gang of bunglers that have smashed our best British chronometer.

So Mr. Hyndman blunders into the present time and utterly misconceives it. I have space for only one or two serious arguments and assertions. If the Social Democrats of Germany were wrong in upholding the Government in 1914, then the Socialists of other countries who did not uphold their Governments should not be treated with scorn by this Englishman for their "ecstasy of pacifism." It can not possibly be true, even if the Bolshevik leaders are villains and monsters, that they "have ruthlessly endeavoured to establish a servile State with capitalism more dominant than ever." It is inanity to say that Russia "has no political history." Russia has a political history, long, dark, and intricate, and the man who could make a statement like that is the last man in the world to understand the recent political history of Russia or of any other country. If it is true that "peace, in fact, can only be made certain by the determination of the peoples themselves to resist, by pressure at home, all attempts of the governing class in any country to

enter upon hostilities," then it is disingenuous to call the "pacifism" of many of the French socialist leaders "unfortunate." If it is true that in 1910 and 1911 "economic and social conditions were" "ripe" "for complete change," then whatever revolution has taken place in Russia since 1911 can not be "untimely."

If it is true that "men could only understand and take advantage of the opportunities afforded them by the inevitable growth of economic forces," then it can not be true that "had Nicholas II thrown off the influence of his half-insane Tsarina and his bigoted men of God, and taken the advice of statesmen and members of his own family, he might, as Louis XVI could have done when Turgot and Malesherbes were in power, have quite possibly helped forward a peaceful and beneficial revolution." If it is true that "the fetishism of money and the worship of individualism are dying down inevitably," then it can not be true that "while the philanthropists of capitalism have been philanthropizing, their fellow-capitalists have been appropriating." If it is true that "the process of historic evolution, slow or fast, can not be overleapt by the most relentless fanatic, least of all in an empire such as that of Russia" (why does evolution evolve more or less in one place than in another?); and if it is true that "the vast movements of world-wide civilization develop themselves under conditions which take much less account of the greatest individuals," then why back down and confess, apropos of Lenin, that "the individual here and there does count in human affairs, nevertheless"? If this man, Lenin, is "perhaps not even a man of high intelligence," why endow him with "some inscrutable hypnotic power"? In other words, why talk of "miracles" in order to square yourself with 1880, in the very act of accusing Lenin of being a man with certain misconceived theories which "go wrong, as it was inevitable they should"?

FINALLY, we in the Western world are dealing with a country, Russia, which we know only at second-hand and in translation. Mr. Hyndman says that Lenin is not "a powerful writer." I do not know whether he is or not, but certain English versions of pamphlets alleged to be his are so mightily powerful that I recommend them to Mr. Hyndman as models; they may improve his style and his logic. We have to read of Russia in a language not her own, though her learned leaders seem to be polyglots and able to speak to us in our language. In our own language, we, as historians, should always try to get up a good bibliography and dig out a little information before we write. Mr. Hyndman's book is dated September, 1920, less than a year ago, after many books by Englishmen and Americans for and against Russia had been published. Mr. Hyndman's Bibliographic note is as follows: "The best books on Bolshevism have been published in the United States. They are 'Bolshevism' and 'The Greatest Failure in All History,' both by John Spargo (Harper Brothers, New York), also 'Sovietism,' by English Walling, containing a very full collection of official Bolshevik documents. The case for the Bolshevik Dictatorship has been stated in England by Eden and Cedar Paul, 'Creative Revolution: a Study in Communist Ergatocracy' (Allen and Unwin, London), and in R. W. Postgate's 'The Bolshevik Theory' (Grant Richards Ltd., London)." Only five books! And the best books are those by Messrs. Spargo and Walling!

JOHN MACY.

THE following recent books are recommended to readers of the *Freeman*:

"Three One-Act Plays," by Stark Young. Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd Company.

"A Philosophical Review of Reform," by Percy Bysshe Shelley. New York: Oxford University Press.

"A Selection from the Poems of Giosu  Carducci." Translated, with an introduction, by Emily A. Tribe. New York: Longmans, Green & Co.

From our post-bag.

WE wish that we could convey to FREEMAN readers the pleasure we get from the notes which often adorn subscription forms. Almost everybody who renews his allegiance takes the trouble to add an appreciative word. It is as if they felt that their check alone were not sufficient payment. Well, the check is important and necessary, but if there were only checks and no expressions of opinion we would feel very much like the stump-speaker who was deeply chagrined at the failure of his eloquence to stir his audience to even a single handclap until he learned that he had addressed a convention of deaf-mutes by mistake.

FREEMAN readers represent the most highly diversified lot of people we have ever dealt with, and their spontaneous effusions afford infinite variety.

For example, here's a man in Montague, Mass., who, we suspect is having a little fun at our expense (metaphorically only, for he sent a check):

You have notified me that my subscription to the *Freeman* expires with the 29th June issue. Without the *Freeman* as part of my mental diet, scurvy of the brain is sure to set in. Yet what am I to do with just seven dollars and sixty-nine cents as the sum total of our family's monetary wealth? I deal in articles of anti-scorbutic value to mere physical man—tomatoes and sich—but these will not ripen for a few weeks yet. So if you can afford to trust me until about August 1st, I hereby promise to send the money as per enclosed renewal order at that time,—you in return to keep right on shipping me the *Freeman*.

Sold enuf cabbage and peas yesterday, therefore money enclosed.

B. E. D.

This man, who lives on the Pacific coast—Oakland, to be precise—is a bit cautious, considering the enthusiasm with which he recognizes what we stand for, but we prefer caution to a too-hasty acceptance:

Some weeks ago we received two sample copies of the *Freeman*, which we read, but I begin to suspect rather cursorily. We happened to-day to pick up from a mass of clippings "Why the *Freeman*?" and we have really read it. We have been for two years subscribers to [an esteemed contemporary], and while we greatly enjoy it as a source of in-

tellectual entertainment and some valuable information, we see little signs of it guiding us to economic salvation while there is still anything left to be saved. We were surprised, and almost startled, having been so little impressed with your sample copies to find in "Why the *Freeman*?" a simple and perfectly definite statement of the difference we have long realized between the radical and the liberal, between those who see that the first thing for labour and capital to do is to get their feet planted on the earth, their natural and inalienable basis of operations, and those who imagine that they can operate successfully and harmoniously while suspended in the air like the Kilkenny cats.

Well, to come to the point, we want to become better acquainted with the *Freeman*, and are sending one dollar for a ten weeks trial subscription.

G. B. R.

The woman who writes the letter that follows is distinguished in library circles. We wish we might also print the conclusion of her letter for it is an unfavourable criticism of one of our contributors, but his feelings have to be considered.

Enclosed find check for six months more. I began taking you to see what you were like, though I didn't quite see how I could find time to read another paper, and every time I've thought of dropping you you've printed something that interested me so much that I knew life would be a much drearier waste without you! So I've managed to raise the cash and sit up late o' nights to read you.

Your allusions to Dickens are a delight, and your paragraphs on the politicians now playing president an even greater joy.

C. B.

Let FREEMAN readers imagine that they belong to an association composed exclusively of "high-brows" we offer this perfectly honest communication which Andrew Johnson might have written: Dear sir.s!

"The *Freeman*" is a first classe magasin, the best i ever seen. So i will send \$3. for six month subscripsen.

Respectfully your.s.

A. R.

It so happens that of the five letters selected for this week's ultimate page four are from New England. This may tend to correct the notion that this early stronghold of American freedom has become 100% reactionary. For obvious reasons we withhold even the initials of the New Englander whose comment on "The Myth of a Guilty Nation" is typical of many since we announced that series:

Will you please send 10-week subscriptions of the *Freeman* to the following addresses. I want said subscriptions to cover the articles on the responsibility of the war, about which I know personally much more than our newspapers have printed. That is, I know a great deal of what was suppressed through intent to deceive or just plain ignorance. [Five names]

10 weeks and the three opening numbers of The Myth of a Guilty Nation for \$1.25

ONE of our distinguished subscribers writes: "If I were rich I would distribute thousands of the FREEMAN with 'The Myth of a Guilty Nation' series." He is not rich, but he has backed his words with deeds. Every day we receive letters praising the articles. We have a few back numbers but as time passes these will command a premium and eventually they will disappear. Why don't you start your friends as FREEMAN readers with this series as a beginning? Use this form:

THE FREEMAN INC., B. W. Huebsch, President,
116 West 13th Street, New York

Send the FREEMAN for 10 weeks beginning with No. 74, and the three back-numbers containing the beginning of "The Myth of a Guilty Nation" series, to

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for which I enclose \$1.25.

Signed.....